



Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-93-054
Tuesday
23 March 1993

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CONTENTS

23 March 1993

NOTICE TO READERS: An * indicates material not disseminated in electronic form.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab League Anniversary Statement Noted [MENA]	1
Arab League Chief on Libyan, Deportees Crisis [MENA]	1
Arab League Delegates Preview 99th Council Agenda [MENA]	2

Palestinian Affairs

Delegation To Visit U.S. About Talks [London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 17 Mar]	2
Officials Cited on Aims of Visit [JORDAN TIMES 23 Mar]	2
'Ashrawi Comments [AFP]	3
Palestinian Leadership Weighs Clinton Message [AL-MANAR 22 Mar]	3
'Arafat on Peace Process, 'Israeli Escalation' [Paris Radio Monte Carlo]	3
'Arafat Asks Chinese Envoy for Support in UN [Tunis Radio]	5
'Arafat Adviser Views Negotiations, Deportees [AL-MUSAWWAR 19 Mar]	6
Abu-Sharif Accuses Israelis of Escalating Violence [Algiers Radio]	8
Abu-Sharif on Ties With U.S., Negotiations [AL-JUMHURIYAH 17 Mar]	8
Hurani on Peace Process, Saudi Support, Russian Role [AL-RA'Y 20 Mar]	9
Nusaybah on Participation in Talks, Deportee Crisis [Jerusalem Radio]	9
Hamas Leaders on Expellees, Talks, Other Issues [AL-DUSTUR 22 Mar]	10
U.S. Should Deal 'Earnestly' With Palestinians [Algiers VOP]	11
Rabin 'Got More Than He Asked For' From U.S. [London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI 17 Mar]	11
Candidates for Ambassadorship to Jordan Profiled [London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 18 Mar]	12

ARAB AFRICA

Algeria

'Hundreds of Thousands' Demonstrate Against Violence [AFP]	13
Interior Minister Hardi Interviewed on Situation [London AL-WASAT 15-21]	13
FIS Calls For Increased Opposition Against Regime [IRNA]	15
'Sabotage' Reported in Blida Province [Algiers Radio]	15

Egypt

Mubarak Returns From Saudi Arabian Visit [Cairo Radio]	15
Musa Comments on Visit [MENA]	15
Musa Interviewed on Resumption of Talks [London MBC TV]	16
'Abd-al-Rahman on NY Blast, Islamic Issues [London AL-HAYAH 18 Mar]	17
'Arafat To Visit Cairo 28 Mar; Envoy Comments [MENA]	19
Paper Urges Rabin To Halt 'Savage' Campaigns [MENA]	20
Palestinian Refusal To Attend Talks Supported [MENA]	20
Writer Says U.S. 'Biggest' Israeli Weapon [AL-JUMHURIYAH 17 Mar]	20
Split in al-Jihad Seen; 90 'Extremists' Caught [AL-AHRAM PRESS AGENCY]	20
Mufts Denounces Terrorist Actions Against Tourism [MENA]	21
Legal Expert Comments on Combating Islamic Terrorists [Hamburg DER SPIEGEL 22 Mar]	21
Writer Urges 'National Front' Against Terrorism [AL-MUSAWWAR 19 Mar]	22
Military Court Resumes Trial of 49 'Terrorists' [MENA]	22
Case Postponed; Media Reports Banned [MENA]	23
Terrorist Arrest, Weapons Discovery in Qatar Denied [MENA]	23

Morocco

Source Says Election May Be Postponed to 25 Jun [MAP]	23
King Receives PLO's Mahmud 'Abbas, Faysal al-Husayni [Rabat Radio]	23
Algerians Said To Intercept Polisario Arms for FIS [MAP]	23

Sudan

TNA Speaker Welcomes Garang Cease-Fire Order [Omdurman Radio]	24
Nasir Faction on SPLA-Government Cease-Fire [London International]	24
Foreign Minister Meets Egyptian Ambassador [Omdurman Radio]	24

ARABIAN PENINSULA

Kuwait

* Baqir Discusses Organization To Prohibit Evil [London AL-HAYAH 18 Mar]	25
* Democratic Forum Elects New Secretary General [London AL-HAYAH 16 Mar]	25

Qatar

Speaker Receives Message From Iran's Nateq-Nuri [IRNA]	25
--	----

Saudi Arabia

Crown Prince Warns Against Political Violence [SPA]	26
---	----

United Arab Emirates

Zayid Asks Religious Men To Counter 'Extremism' [WAKH]	26
--	----

IRAQ

U.S. Reportedly Wants Informal Sanctions Review [INA]	28
Truce With U.S. Said in Effect Despite 'Negative Signs' [INA]	28
New Euphrates Canal Said 'Depriving' Marshlands [Voice of Kurdistan]	28
Saddam Cables Fidel Castro on Reelection [INA]	28
Ramadan Holds Talks With Bulgarian Official [INA]	28
Arab League Informed of Airspace Violations	29
16 Mar [Baghdad Radio]	29
17, 18 Mar [INA]	29
Trade Minister on Private Sector, Rationing [AL-'IRAQ AL-IQTISADI 13 Mar]	29
Alcoholic Drinks Banned From 0600-1800 Fridays [AL-'IRAQ 17 Mar]	30

ISRAEL

Knesset Rejects Motions of No-Confidence in Government [Tel Aviv Radio]	31
Rabinovich Address Creates Stir Over Expulsion Policy [Jerusalem Radio]	31
UN Envoy on Arab Push To Convene Security Council [Jerusalem Radio]	31
Hamas Claims Killing Soldier in Jabalya Camp Operation [AFP]	31
Settlers, Rightist Parties Protest Security Situation [Jerusalem TV]	32
Police Disperse Right-Wing Demonstration in Jerusalem [Jerusalem Radio]	32
Arabs Injured, Knesset Members Attacked in Riots [Jerusalem Radio]	32
Home of Attacker Sealed [Jerusalem Radio]	32
2 Killed by Army in Riots at Gaza Strip Refugee Camp [Jerusalem Radio]	32
Soldiers Kill 2 Children in Gaza Strip [Jerusalem TV]	33
Settler Interrogated After Killing Tied Arab [Jerusalem Radio]	33
Local Arabs Suspected of Belonging to Fatah Ring [Jerusalem Radio]	33
Method of Operation of 'Hard-Core' Squads Noted [HA'ARETZ 22 Mar]	33
Navy's Saar 5 Class Missile Boat Launched in U.S. [Jerusalem Radio]	34
Deputy Foreign Minister Meets IRC Representative [Jerusalem Radio]	34

Satellite Communication Accord Signed With ROK	[HA'ARETZ 21 Mar]	34
Meretz Backs Talks With Palestinians on Gaza Withdrawal	[Jerusalem Radio]	34
Labor Seeks Agudat Yisra'el Support for Coalition	[HA'ARETZ 23 Mar]	34
Citizens Rights Movement Elects New Chairman	[HA'ARETZ 22 Mar]	35

LEBANON

Al-Hariri Views Domestic Affairs	[VOL]	36
Commentary on al-Hariri Interview	[Voice of the Oppressed]	44
Buwayz Says Peace Talks Need 'Further Momentum'	[Beirut Radio]	45
Al-Hariri Leaves for 'Brief' Visit to Damascus	[RFL]	45
Article Says Keep Syria Out of Domestic Affairs	[AL-DIYAR 15 Mar]	45
Russian Envoy Meets al-Hirawi, Comments on Talks	[VOM]	46
Al-Rantisi Comments on Jerusalem Stabbing	[VOM]	46
Deportees Said Divided Over Jerusalem Day	[VOL]	47
Hizballah Marks Jerusalem Day in Beirut Rally	[Voice of the Oppressed]	47
Minister Details Financial Agreements With France	[Beirut Radio]	47
Interior Minister on Fundamentalism, Security	[MENA]	48
Phalangist Centers To Be Handed to 'Legitimate' Leadership	[VOL]	48
Presidential Decree Amends Titles of Ministers	[VOM]	48
Mujahidin Said To Kill 5 in 'Martyrdom Operation'	[VOM]	49
SLA Radio Denies 'Suicide Operation'	[Voice of the South]	49
Hizballah Denies Two Killed in Clash	[VOL]	49
Enemy Casualties Reported in 'Lightning Attacks'	[Voice of the Oppressed]	49
Amal-Hizballah Groups Attack Southern Positions	[Voice of the Oppressed]	49
'Enemy' Warplanes Draw Fire Over al-Biq'a	[Voice of the Oppressed]	49

SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan

Assassination Attempt Against Rabbani Reported	[THE NEWS 23 Mar]	51
Hekamatyar Confirms Meeting of Jehadi Leaders Near Kabul	[Radio Message of Freedom]	51
Hekamatyar Urges Parliamentary Elections Within 8 Months	[Radio Message of Freedom]	51
Mojahedin Crush Robbers Along Qandahar-Herat Highway	[Radio Message of Freedom]	52
Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Borujerdi Visits		52
Received by Dostum	[Tehran Radio]	52
Meeting With Rabbani	[Tehran Radio]	52
Borujerdi Distributes Aid To Refugees	[IRNA]	52
Borujerdi, Afghan Leaders Review Peace Process	[IRNA]	52
* Sources Discuss Mas'ud's Role After Talks	[London AL-HAYAH 10 Mar]	53
Rabbani Congratulates Pakistan's Sharif, Khan	[Kabul Radio]	54

Bangladesh

'Strong Protest' Lodged With Burma Over Border Attack	[AFP]	54
Committee To Prevent Rao From Attending SAARC Summit		
[THE BAGLADESH OBSERVER 14 Mar]		54
Japan To Provide \$200-Million Loan for 5 Projects	[Dhaka Radio]	55
Zia Briefs ADB President on Government's Priorities	[Dhaka Radio]	55
Top Militant, 2 Comrades Killed in Punjab	[Delhi Radio]	55
Rail Tracks Blown Up by Jharkhand Activists	[Delhi Radio]	55
West Asian Groups Said To Be Behind Bombay Blasts	[THE HINDUSTAN TIMES 15 Mar]	55
Tamil Nadu Government Permits 21 Mar BJP Meeting in Madras	[Delhi Radio]	56
Tamil Nadu Congress-I Not To Patch Up With AIADMK	[Delhi Radio]	56
BJP's Advani on Alliance With AIADMK	[Delhi Radio]	56
'Emergency' Congress-I Meeting Begins in Delhi	[Delhi Radio]	56
Congress Committee Reiterates Faith in Rao's Leadership	[Delhi Radio]	56
Chief Minister Denies Allowing Activities of RSS, VHP	[Delhi Radio]	57
MP's Call On Center To Intervene Over 'Famine' in Bihar	[Delhi Radio]	57
Inflation Rate Comes Down to 6.3 Percent	[Delhi Radio]	57

Food Output Likely To Reach 200 Million Tons in '93	[Delhi Radio]	57
Dinesh Singh on Fate of Indians in Hong Kong	[Delhi Radio]	57
Indian Envoy on Relations With Islamic World	[IRNA]	58
Business Contracts Signed With Uzbekistan	[Delhi Radio]	58

Maldives

Coastguards Seize Poaching Ship, Arrest Russian Crew	[AFP]	58
--	-------	----

Nepal

Japanese Aid for Food, Educational Programs Cited	[AFP]	59
Power Cuts May Continue Until July 1995	[AFP]	59

Pakistan

Prime Minister: Accusations of Terrorism 'Totally False'	[THE PAKISTAN TIMES 23 Mar]	59
UK Frigates Alternative as Leases for U.S. Ships Expire	[DAWN 23 Mar]	60
Indian Envoy Refutes Charges on Media Ban in Kashmir	[Delhi Radio]	60
Government To File Petition Against Kashmir Court Ruling	[Islamabad Radio]	60
President, Premier Send New Year Message to Rafsanjani	[IRNA]	60

Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab League Anniversary Statement Noted

NC2103160493 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1500 GMT
21 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 21 Mar (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid has emphasized that differences should be handled rationally and objectively so we can clear the Arab atmosphere, a measure badly needed to confront the numerous challenges facing the Arab nation.

In a statement today marking the 42d anniversary of the Arab League, he said: We must form a strong Arab economic bloc that is able to compete against other international blocs. As one Arab nation, we also must prepare ourselves to face the changes taking place around us and to benefit from others' experiences to achieve our goals and ambitions.

He called for creating sufficient means for Arab action to achieve its goals regarding crucial issues, foremost of which are the Palestinian issue; liberation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Syrian Golan Heights, and southern Lebanon; founding an independent Palestinian state; and establishing the [Palestinians'] right of return.

The secretary general appealed to the international community to help halt Israel's violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention and international charters and resolutions. He said the escalation of the killings, expulsions, detentions, and destruction by the Israeli occupation authorities will only generate more violence and counter-violence.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid reiterated that the Arab League is interested in reconciling the warring Somali parties and in achieving national accord among the various rivals in a manner that preserves Somalia's unity and independence.

He noted that the League has dealt objectively with the Libyan-West dispute over the Lockerbie issue in order to preserve Libya's sovereignty within the framework of international law and legitimacy. He added that Libya has been responsive to all proposed solutions to resolve the crisis, and that it also has shown interest in the Kuwaiti POW's question because it is a humanitarian issue.

In his statement, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said the League has stressed the need to preserve Iraq's territorial integrity and the unity of its people and to provide the basic needs for the Arab people in Iraq. He voiced support for the Lebanese Government's demand to impose sovereignty over all its territories in accordance with UN Resolution 425.

He added that the League has preserved Arab rights to river waters that run through or emanate from Arab territories. He said the League seeks to provide the necessary conditions to construct pan-Arab security in a manner that brings about peace and stability for all Arab states, depending on collective Arab resources.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid stated that the Arab League seriously seeks to restore solidarity, revive joint Arab action—particularly in the economic and political fields—and to resolve current and future issues facing the Arab nation in the context of the united Arab will.

Arab League Chief on Libyan, Deportees Crisis

NC2103163693 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1525 GMT
21 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 21 Mar (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid has reiterated that contacts are under way with UN Secretary General Butrus-Butrus Ghali and the Security Council to work out a peaceful solution to the Libyan-Western crisis.

During a news conference he held today, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said that the Arab countries oppose the escalation of the crisis. He said that the Arab countries wish to maintain the Arab-European dialogue. He noted that the Libyan problem is obstructing the possibility of holding a ministerial meeting between the two sides.

To a question about his visit to the Palestinian deportees, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said: We respect the Lebanese Government's wishes. He stressed the need for Israel to implement UN Resolution 799 on the deportees' return.

The Arab League secretary general said that solving the deportees issue will greatly and positively contribute to the peace process. He said the Arab countries are eager for this process to be successful. He pointed out that the Arab League is trying to find a solution to the deportees issue and expressed hope that these efforts will be successful and that the negotiations will resume as scheduled on 20 April.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid condemned the growing Israeli practices against the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories, noting that Israel cannot continue its iron fist policy because this would cause the legitimate resistance against occupation to escalate. Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid called on Israel to safeguard the sanctity of the holy places in the occupied Arab territories, adding that Arab political contacts continue with the countries interested in this issue.

During his news conference, the Arab League secretary general pointed out that Arab action should be based on frankness so an all-out Arab reconciliation can be attained.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid voiced support for setting up an Arab court of justice to take part in solving many of the problems facing the Arab world. He proposed that this issue be submitted to the Arab League Council.

The Arab League secretary general said he will visit Austria next week to take part in the Islamic-Christian dialogue. In his address, he will touch on the Bosnia-Herzegovina issue and will urge the international community to end this tragedy.

To a question about the Kuwaiti POW's, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said that the Arab League awaits Iraq's response to the files on well over 600 prisoners. Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid had received these files from the Red Cross.

Arab League Delegates Preview 99th Council Agenda*NC2103143693 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1323 GMT 21 Mar 93*

[Text] Cairo, 21 Mar (MENA)—The Arab League member countries' permanent delegates held a meeting today at the organization's headquarters, chaired by Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Isamat 'Abd-al-Majid. The aim of the meeting was to preview the agenda of the Arab League Council's 99th session, scheduled for 30 March.

The agenda includes approximately 49 items, at the top of which is the peace process involving the Palestinian issue, the situation in southern Lebanon and the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, the Libyan-Western crisis, the situation in Somalia, Arab-European dialogue, and Arab-African cooperation.

Palestinian Affairs**Delegation To Visit U.S. About Talks***PM1903121193 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 17 Mar 93 p 3*

[Unattributed report: "Palestinian Delegation To Visit Washington Next Week"]

[Text] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT—Palestinian sources in Amman say that a high-level Palestinian delegation will go to Washington next week at the official invitation of the U.S. Government.

The sources told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the delegation, which will include some members of the Palestinian delegation to the peace negotiations, will hold talks with U.S. State Department officials on the peace process and the possibility of Palestinian participation in the ninth round of negotiations scheduled to be held in Washington on 20 April.

The Palestinian delegation, the sources said, will try to convince the U.S. officials of the need to resume the political dialogue between the United States and the PLO.

Officials Cited on Aims of Visit*JN2303075893 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 23 Mar 93 pp 1, 5*

["Special to the JORDAN TIMES" by Wafa' 'Amr]

[Text] Amman—A Palestinian delegation headed by Faysal al-Husayni, leader of the Palestinian delegation to peace talks with Israel, will visit Washington this week to hold talks with American officials on the Middle East peace process and the deadlock resulting from Israel's expulsion of Palestinians in December.

Another equally important Palestinian objective of the visit would be to secure better terms of reference in the peace talks. Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials said Monday [22 March].

According to Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, member of the PLO Executive Committee and head of the Information Department of the organisation, the delegation's visit comes in response to an American message to the PLO.

Mr. 'Abd-Rabbuh, who left Amman for Tunis Monday after a two-day visit, could not provide more details of the American message, which was received by PLO Executive Committee member Mahmud 'Abbas and Mr. al-Husayni in Morocco on Friday.

PLO officials who spoke to the Jordan Times from Tunis on Monday sounded more optimistic after the receipt of the message, and voiced hope that Washington was slowly coming around to meet some of the key demands that the Palestinians have tabled as a precondition for their attendance at the next round of peace talks scheduled to begin in Washington on April 20.

Mr. al-Husayni, who arrived here from Tunis Monday, also sounded upbeat. "We expect things to move within the coming few days," he told the Jordan Times without elaboration.

Mr. al-Husayni said the Palestinian side had responded to Friday's American message affirming the delegation's visit to Washington and covering "some of the points tackled in the letter from the U.S." The exchange of message was done through the American ambassador in Tunis.

The Palestinian reply, Mr. al-Husayni said, "includes the requirements which we view as most necessary for the success of the peace process."

Mr. al-Husayni said the American letter "indicated that some positive measures would be taken soon."

Tunis-based PLO officials said the American letter urged Palestinians to seize "the historic chance of achieving peace" and offered reassurances that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, who held talks with President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Washington last week, was "serious in his approach towards the peace process."

The American letter also expressed Washington's concern to ensure that progress is made on all tracks of negotiations between Israel and the Arabs, and assured the Palestinians that separate peace treaties between other Arab parties and Israel outside the framework of a comprehensive peace agreement were not likely.

A similar American letter was also delivered to other Arab states such as Morocco and Egypt, which were exerting efforts to bring the Americans and Israel to approve a six-point compromise deal formulated and agreed in principle between Palestinians and Mr. Christopher during his visit to the Middle East last month.

The deal, aimed at defusing the expellee crisis which has stalled the peace process, included Palestinian demands for Israeli commitments not to resort to expulsion in the future and to the principle of land in exchange for peace as enshrined in U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

Mr. al-Husayni and other Palestinian delegates accompanying him to Washington "will seek to follow up on the demand concerning 242 and 338, and thus improve the terms of reference for the peace talks," said a Tunis-based PLO official.

The official said the Palestinians were informed through third parties that Israel would refrain from expelling Palestinians, but that its commitment would remain unannounced. He also said that Israel would accept speeding up the return of the 400 expellees and might increase the number of the first batch of expellees allowed to return from the 101 it has proposed.

According to Mr. 'Abd-Rabbuh, "the Palestinian delegation will discuss the expellee crisis with American officials and seek unequivocal assurances that Resolution 242 applies to all occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem."

While Mr. 'Abd-Rabbuh declined to elaborate further, the Tunis-based PLO Officials said the Palestinians were not insisting that Israel undertake such a commitment to 242 in public.

"They (Israelis) could provide a American-arranged guarantee to this effect and we would accept it," the official said.

Parallel to the Washington talks, representatives of Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Palestinians will meet in Damascus to come up with a collective response to the American-Russian letters of invitations to the April 20 talks.

'Ashrawi Comments

NC2303123693 Paris AFP in English 1152 GMT
23 Mar 93

[Text] Jerusalem, March 23 (AFP) - A group of Palestinians from the occupied territories led by Faysal al-Husayni will meet U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in Washington on Friday [26 February], spokeswoman Hanan 'Ashrawi said Tuesday.

The talks will focus on the peace process, the fate of some 400 expelled Palestinians stuck in southern Lebanon, and human rights violations in the occupied territories, 'Ashrawi said.

The Palestinian delegation rejected an invitation to the ninth round of Middle East peace talks set to resume April 20 in Washington, demanding a solution to the deportee crisis and an Israeli pledge to end expulsions.

Al-Husayni, the head of the Palestinian peace team, said in Amman that the U.S. administration had sent a message to the Palestinians which he described as "satisfactory and containing positive points."

Al-Husayni handed over a reply to the U.S. ambassador in Tunis John McCarthy on Monday.

Palestinian Leadership Weighs Clinton Message

TA2303132193 Jerusalem AL-MANAR in Arabic
22 Mar 93 p 1

[Text] The Palestinian leadership has received an important message from U.S. President Bill Clinton stressing that the resumption of U.S.-Palestinian dialogue was imminent. The message contained what might be described as a U.S. "promise" to achieve practical and good progress toward the establishment of peace in the region at the ninth round of negotiations. The U.S. message called on the Palestinian leadership to participate in the upcoming round, noting that Israel will adopt positive steps at the start of the negotiations.

It has been learned that the Palestinian leadership is studying this message meticulously and is holding consultations about it with Arab parties on the eve of the cordons states' foreign ministers conference. Political circles believe that, apparently, it will be decided to participate in the negotiations, but the Palestinian side will be given the right to choose the stance that it deems appropriate.

'Arafat on Peace Process, 'Israeli Escalation'

JN2203193293 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1735
GMT 22 Mar 93

[Telephone interview with PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, also known as Abu-'Ammar, by correspondent Salah Salamah; place and date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Salamah] President Yasir 'Arafat, the occupied Palestinian territories are rife with confrontations. There is a clear Israeli escalation which has, so far, killed and wounded many. You accuse the Israeli Government of adopting repressive measures against the Palestinians in the occupied territories. What are the reasons that make Rabin's government take such measures while it prepares to conduct a new round of negotiations?

['Arafat] First of all, we should keep in mind that Rabin is famous for his haughty attitude. He is the one who adopted the ironfisted policy. I would like to emphasize that when the intifadah was launched, Rabin was in Washington. He was asked about the intifadah and he replied: What intifadah? Wait until I go back, and I will crush it in two days. At the time, I challenged him. I told him: You have two days, two weeks, two months, and two years and let's see who wins. We are accustomed to him. He is the one who carried out the the bone-breaking policy. He is the one who adopted the ironfisted policy. Now, he is the one who champions the concept of reoccupying the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem. What does reoccupying them mean? Like he said, there are 42,000 soldiers with their armored cars, with their helicopters which carry missiles, and all these new terrorist means. All this should be clear. However, he should understand that our reply to this bloody escalation is to further escalate the intifadah. Let the earth be scorched under the invaders' feet.

[Salamah] Brother president 'Arafat, how will the Palestinians confront this escalation? Do you support the recourse to arms and the knife-stabbing operations that are currently taking place instead of remaining content with the intifadah of the stones?

[Arafat] Let me tell you something. The intifadah of the stones is the basis. However, Rabin should blame only himself. I have repeatedly warned him. I told him that violence begets violence, and that there are mighty people among us. This violence is a double-edged weapon, and that the beginning of the settlement of this vicious circle of violence is the termination of the occupation which is the main reason for all these tragedies. I said this in the past concerning the intifadah; that our intifadah will take place in stages. Rabin should realize that we are speaking seriously. We have mighty people among us. Therefore, patiently persevere, as did all apostles of inflexible purposes, and be in no haste about the unbelievers. On the day that they see the punishment promised them, it will be as if they had not tarried more than one hour in a single day. Thine but to proclaim the message: But shall any be destroyed except those who transgress? [Koranic verse]

[Salamah] Do you think, brother Abu-'Ammar, that the intifadah has now inaugurated a new stage?

[Arafat] Rabin should know that he cannot claim to be a hero and a general of the war against us. He knows that he could not score any military victory over the people. His nuclear bombs, aircraft, missiles, and tanks—no matter how big they are—cannot triumph over the children of the stones. The children of the stones are our new generals, who know how to reply to general Rabin, who is still thinking in a war mentality, rather than a peace mentality. The Israeli people elected him in the interest of peace, and not to step up brutal acts against the Palestinian people, our children, women, and holy places. No, the Israeli people elected him to bring peace to them. After meeting with President Clinton, Rabin came back to escalate matters. I say to President Clinton that he should understand this message: The PLO can face a challenge with a similar challenge.

[Salamah] Do you hope that Israel will implement Security Council resolutions stipulating withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories, including the West Bank and Gaza Strip?

[Arafat] Otherwise, what is the meaning of the initiative.... [Arafat pauses] Dear Salamah, on what basis did we go to Madrid? Was this not on the basis of President Bush's initiative calling for peace for land and implementing Resolutions 242 and 338? This means withdrawal from all the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, foremost of which is holy Jerusalem.

[Salamah] Has anything of all this been achieved?

[Arafat] Would you please let me continue. This is in addition to achieving the political rights of the Palestinian people and peace for everybody. So, Rabin knows, and Shamir before him also knew, that they went to Madrid on this basis. If they are trying to evade this, then we will not

lose anything. We will expose Rabin to public opinion and show that he does not want peace, but rather surrender. If he is seeking surrender, no one in our Arab nation or Palestinian people contemplates surrender. He should also know that there is no one among us who would forget Jerusalem or give up one inch of the soil of Jerusalem or Palestine.

[Salamah] Brother President Yasir 'Arafat, following Yitzhaq Rabin's visit to Washington, the United States and Russia extended official invitations for the next round of bilateral peace negotiations set for 20 April.

[Arafat] True.

[Salamah] You have refused to accept the invitation.

[Arafat] Also true.

[Salamah] Is it possible that something will happen between now until 20 April to make you participate in this round?

[Arafat] First of all, there are many developments. As for participating or not, this will be decided by the Palestinian leadership which will meet, God willing, after the meeting...

[Salamah, interrupting] ...scheduled to be held in Damascus.

[Arafat] The five-party foreign minister meeting in Damascus on 28-29 March. Also, it is well known that President Husni Mubarak and His Majesty King Hassan II of Morocco are now making efforts—I do not want to say mediation—for which we are thankful, in this direction between us and the U.S. Administration. As you know, in the past 24 hours, we have given a message to my brother Faysal al-Husayni, since he is the head of the Palestinian team to the peace process. Of course, brother Faysal will today deliver it to the U.S. ambassador in Tunis. Of course, we will then continue our contacts soon, God willing, with the U.S. Administration.

[Salamah] What have you asked for in this letter?

[Arafat] Many things. We have pointed out the things that we agreed upon with the U.S. Administration in the letter of assurances and the letter of invitation, as well as the six points on which we agreed with Mr. Christopher during his last tour. Israel was supposed to abide by four of these points, but it went back on two of them. Two other points were to be the responsibility of the United States, including the point on the negotiations which should have President Bush's initiative—land for peace, Resolutions 242 and 338, establishing the national, political rights of the Palestinian people, and Jerusalem—as the frame of reference. So, two points were the responsibility of the United States and four others the responsibility of Israel.

[Salamah] What about the Palestinians deportees in south Lebanon?

[Arafat] They are included in the four points, or the six points. One of them says that the United States should declare deportations to be illegitimate and illegal, and that

Rabin also should pledge not to carry out any further deportations. Deportations should also not remain a sword hanging over the Palestinian people. You know that deportation for the Palestinian people is a process of transfer, at a time when thousands of new immigrants replace our people, settle in our land, and occupy our holy places.

[Salamah] Brother President Yasir 'Arafat, you have called for the return of the Palestinian deportees, and for Israel to commit itself not to deport any Palestinian from the occupied Palestinian territories in the future. Do the given facts on hand make you optimistic as to the possibility of implementing these two demands?

[Arafat] We are not afraid of the saber rattling. This should be clear to those far and near. We are not the weak party in the equation. So long as peace is not the Palestinian peace that is based on the recognition of the Palestinian people's national and political rights, there will be no peace. Peace is the Palestinian peace. In April, 18 months will have passed since Madrid. We have gained nothing. Here, I would like to ask President Clinton's administration the following question: What about defending human rights and what about U.S. credibility which is now being tested? Because, what is taking place in the occupied territories endangers the entire peace process. I would like to see what stand the U.S. Administration adopts. Does it use one or two yardsticks? Does international legitimacy consist of two yardsticks? One against Palestine and the Arab nation, and another in favor of Israel? Or is there one yardstick that applies to all?

[Salamah] In light of these questions and the demands you have put forth, what do you expect from President Clinton's administration?

[Arafat] We will wait and see. As I told you, our contacts with the U.S. Administration have not ceased, whether directly or indirectly. As I said, some brothers like President Mubarak and His Majesty King Hassan II are using their good offices which, God willing, will produce positive results in this respect.

[Salamah] Brother President Yasir 'Arafat, the Arab foreign ministers, as you have stated, will meet in Damascus on 28 March....

[Arafat, interrupting] But Salah, there is another point. There is the joint Syrian-Egyptian message that was communicated to the U.S. Administration on the deportees to enable us to resume the negotiations.

[Salamah] Do you expect that the meetings will result in the adoption of a clear and explicit stand on the question of a collective Arab participation in the negotiations and on what basis?

[Arafat] Let me remind you of the resolution which was adopted by the (seven) in Cairo—and by the Arab foreign ministers too—which clearly affirmed that to guarantee the continuation of the peace process, the deportees issue should be ended and one should abide by the terms of reference of the peace process, with holy Jerusalem at the forefront.

[Salamah] Brother President Yasir 'Arafat, what would you like to say to the masses of steadfast Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories in light of what is currently happening there?

[Arafat] I want to say something. First, I would like to call for more unity, more unity, more unity. I say to our people inside the occupied territories: Resist and confront this bloody terrorism and let the earth be scorched under the invaders' feet. There are mighty people inside the occupied territories. We say: And we wished to be gracious to those who were being depressed in the land, to make them leaders in faith and make them heirs to establish a firm place for them in the land. [Koranic Verse]. God definitely tells us the truth when he says: Ye shall enter the sacred mosque, if God wills, with minds secure. [Koranic verse]. Victory is coming. I say this to my beloved ones in our occupied land. I say this to my beloved ones from Janin, southern Lebanon, Nabulus, 'Abir, Jerusalem, Hebron, Gaza, Khan Yunus, and Rafah, I say to all of them that we have a date with victory, we have a date with the dawn. Dawn will break and victory is coming and the state is a stones throw away. We say: And to enter your temple as they had entered it before, and to visit with destruction all that fell into their power. [Koranic verse]

[Salamah] A final question to President Yasir 'Arafat. Do you expect a European role, particularly a role played by France, and a Russian role to have a stronger influence that would make Israel adhere to the land-for-peace principle?

[Arafat] Yes, because, first of all, as you know, we consider Russia a basic partner, a cochairman [preceding word in English], supervising the international peace conference hand in hand with the United States. Its stand is clear thus far. Russia supports the Palestinian people, the state of Palestine, and the national rights endorsed by Palestinian legitimacy, which it fully recognizes. Russia's stand has not been shaken thus far. As you know, there is a joint Palestinian-Russian committee which meets from time to time to make a lot of decisions.

As for Europe, as you know, we are calling for a clearer, stronger, and more solid European role in the peace process. We are in continuous contact to highlight this European role and influence. We are in continuous contact with them forever whether it is with the Troika, the EEC, or the EFTA [European Free Trade Association]. This is in addition to our contacts with China, Japan, the nonaligned states, the Islamic countries, African countries, Latin American countries, and even Canada. This also includes direct and indirect contacts with the U.S. side.

[Salamah] Thanks to President Yasir 'Arafat for this dialogue with Radio Monte Carlo.

'Arafat Asks Chinese Envoy for Support in UN
LD2203141293 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio
Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] President Yasir 'Arafat has sent an urgent message to the Chinese leadership concerning Israeli crimes against

the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, especially in the Gaza Strip. He asked the Chinese Government to support the Palestinian position on the situation in the occupied territories at the UN Security Council.

The Palestinian president handed this message to the Chinese ambassador in Tunis during their meeting yesterday evening. President 'Arafat and he discussed the Palestinian position on the peace process and the obstacles the Israelis are placing in the way of this process.

'Arafat Adviser Views Negotiations, Deportees

NC2303070793 Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic 19 Mar 93 pp 30-32

[Interview with Dr. Nabil Sha'th, political adviser to PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat, by Dr. Salwa Abu-Sa'dah; place and date not given]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] [Abu-Sa'dah] Will the Palestinian delegation attend the negotiations if all the other Arab delegations attend, as is clear from events in Washington?

[Sha'th] The question that should be raised is: Will the Arab countries go to Washington without the Palestinian delegation? Without the solution of the deportees issue? The Palestinian delegation is ready to go to the negotiations tomorrow if a solution is made available. The solution was actually agreed upon with Secretary Christopher in Jerusalem, but Israel continues to procrastinate over its implementation.

[Abu-Sa'dah] What about Faruq Qaddumi's recent statements that the Arab delegations might indeed take part in the ninth round of talks without the Palestinian delegation in a bid to expose the U.S.-Israeli intentions and that these delegations might withdraw after a round or two of talks if the deportees issue is not solved?

[Sha'th] I doubt this statement is true, because the Arab decision has applied since negotiations started—one decision on all stages of the negotiations. So when any Arab delegation is absent, the other delegations will not attend and if one attends, all will attend. This is part of the overall solution. If the Arabs insist on our presence for justified reasons, we will all go. But if we prove to them that going to the negotiations will harm the pan-Arab interest, they will not go.

The Jordanian and Syrian positions were declared fully and clearly. Our stance is not one of intransigence. We are not using the deportees issue as a pretext to delay the negotiations, because we know the deportees issue concerns 400 of our sons, while the major issue is one of 4 million Palestinian deportees.

We have reached an agreement with the U.S. side and we cannot accept the Israeli extortion, used as a sword over our heads while we hold negotiations. It was agreed before negotiations started that deportations and settlement building stop while the negotiations continue. The Bush administration abided by this and Christopher declared

that he will also abide by it. Why, then, don't we honor our commitments to enable the negotiation process to continue?

If the Americans are unable to implement an agreement reached two weeks ago on the deportees issue, how can we believe they will honor any agreement that might be reached during the negotiations later?

[Abu-Sa'dah] What about reports that President Mubarak and [Syrian Foreign Minister] al-Shar' discussed two basic points as part of the six points, namely the return to the negotiations and the Israeli commitment to stop deportations?

[Sha'th] These two points constitute the basis for solving the deportees issue; any agreement on these two points would open the door to a return to the negotiations.

[Abu-Sa'dah] What will you do if Israel does not stop deportations?

[Sha'th] We have definite information that this is not being raised by the Israeli side. U.S. Consul in Jerusalem Mrs. Molly Williamson has told us that the issue is only one of simultaneousness [tazamun]. So, Israel is ready to announce what it wants if we first announce that we are prepared to return to the negotiations. This means that Israel wants us to renounce the link between the negotiations and the deportation in front of our people in return for Israel's readiness to solve the deportees issue. So Israel wants us to pay for a solution with a struggle within the Palestinian ranks. We reject this. [passage omitted]

[Abu-Sa'dah] Israel always plays up the inter-Palestinian divisions. Is there a danger that it will exploit the disputes between Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the PLO?

[Sha'th] When Israel deported the Palestinians, it wanted the deportation to fan the fire of an inter-Palestinian conflict. It promoted this idea through its proposal that the deportation would remove the obstacle before the negotiating Palestinian delegation and relieve the PLO of Hamas' opposition to the negotiations in the arena of the occupied Palestinian territories. It hoped the PLO would respond to this conspiratorial proposal, which would inflame internal conflicts in the Palestinian arena.

Unfortunately, several leaders in the Israeli peace movement responded to this proposal, foremost among which was Meretz. This prompted us to attack them violently: They forgot we are one nation, assuming we were merely groupings, factions, and parties. The firm Palestinian stance has always been to stand alongside our deported brothers, adopting every position to protect them. This Palestinian stance contributed toward uniting the Palestinian arena and decreasing tension in relations. It also enabled and encouraged the Hamas leadership to meet for the first time with the PLO and Fatah leaderships in Tunis, Khartoum, and Amman in search of ways to unify and coordinate positions and stop any fighting.

Hamas used to bear the brunt of the responsibility for the fighting in the Gaza Strip. It was also blamed for staying outside the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

[Abu-Sa'dah] Could the Palestinian leadership have continued along this line of separating the two issues or do the moves by Rabin and the Palestinian factions opposed to the peace process have any influence on this linkage?

[Sha'ih] The linkage issue escalated because Rabin missed every opportunity to resolve the deportees issue before agreeing upon the date for the next round of negotiations. The deportees acted on this and allowed the return of the first 15 deportees without objection. Then they allowed the return of three sick deportees. They asked us to postpone our return to the Security Council until after the Israeli Supreme Court issued its ruling. They expected it to rule that the deportation was illegal and allow all of the deportees to return. I remember I was in Brussels a day before the court ruling was issued. All the European foreign ministers expected Rabin to use the Israeli Supreme Court's ruling to save face and return the deportees under the pressure of the Israeli Court. But Rabin wasted all these opportunities and clung to his belligerent stance, which violates all legitimate resolutions. This made linkage inevitable, because how could we justify to ourselves and our masses attendance at the negotiations while there is such a dangerous confrontation of the credibility of international law and legitimacy, even of the conditions of the peace process itself.

The positions of Hamas and of those Palestinian factions that oppose the peace process also intensified popular pressure against the peace process, while exploiting the deportation incident. This also pushed for a link between the deportation and the negotiation process, not to resolve the issue of the deportees, but to ruin the political process.

[Abu-Sa'dah] If this is Israel's constant stance of creating more inter-Palestinian divisions, how do you explain this U.S. dialogue with Hamas while the new U.S. Administration—like its predecessor—still insists on refusing to resume the U.S. dialogue with the PLO?

[Sha'ih] The U.S. position is full of contradictions if we look at it logically. But it always serves U.S. interests, not our people's interest. The United States keeps several channels of dialogue with all the forces that might pose a danger to its security. It has a dialogue with Abu-Nidal and maintains security contacts with all the Palestinian factions. I refer here to the meeting in Khartoum between the Hamas representative and the so-called Spanish "Canillo". He is in charge of Spanish intelligence and his sole concern was to obtain security information that could be used if any military operations are carried out against Spanish interests.

This is not a political dialogue. This shows the nature and method of U.S. and European intelligence operations in our region. We want a political, not a security, dialogue with the United States that stems from our people's interests.

[Abu-Sa'dah] Warren Christopher recently stated that the United States will not resume the dialogue with the PLO, because the efforts to hold meetings with 'Arafat were disappointing due to [the PLO's] failure to help us with issues relating to terrorism.

[Sha'ih] This statement greatly angered brother Yasir 'Arafat. And he is right to be angry. I reiterate my reply to the previous question. We are not U.S. intelligence agents. We do not want to give the United States information about military operations.

We want a political dialogue. We will be ready the day the United States becomes convinced of the importance of this dialogue for the sake of world peace, its interests, and ours.

[Abu-Sa'dah] The U.S. secretary of state also stated that the U.S. Administration remains committed to its position that Jerusalem should be discussed through negotiations. What is your comment on this statement?

[Sha'ih] Christopher's stance is a positive one; we appreciate it. He voiced it at the start of his visit to Egypt and reiterated it later in various forms and included it in the six points. This stance is in line with the historic U.S. position that rejects the annexation of Jerusalem to Israel. James Baker also emphasized it in the U.S. letter of assurances to the Palestinian delegation.

But Clinton's statements on Jerusalem during his election campaign made it necessary for the person in charge of U.S. diplomacy to clarify the new Administration's commitment to this important principled position on Jerusalem. Christopher has done this.

I know what Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Mosa told Christopher in Cairo. He told him Jerusalem is an Arab and Egyptian issue, not Palestinian only, and that no peace can be reached without it in the political negotiations. Christopher might have heard similar words from the Arab leaders he met during his tour.

For us, Jerusalem is, first and last, the core of the issue.

[Abu-Sa'dah] What about the Israeli proposal of a unilateral withdrawal from Gaza and what aim lies behind it?

[Sha'ih] The more the Palestinian resistance escalates in Gaza or from it to Israel, the more you hear cries to get rid of Gaza, Israel's burden and graveyard. Even Rabin once said: I wish Gaza would drown with everyone in it. Gaza has shown splendid heroism in resisting the Israeli occupation, especially in Jabaliya, Rafah, and Khan Yunis, such that it has become a dangerous burden for the Israeli Army.

The Israelis told us at the negotiating table that they are ready to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and to dismantle all their settlements there as part of the transitional agreement and before reaching a final agreement. But there are voices inside Israel that oppose this; these voices believe that nothing should be given to the Palestinian people free, not even in implementation of international legitimacy or to reduce Israeli losses.

As an absolute principle and based on our position as a national liberation movement, we cannot but welcome any Israeli withdrawal from our soil. This is our demand; we have struggled for it for many long years. According to the resolutions of our national councils, we will raise our flag and establish our national authority over every inch of our land from which the occupation recedes. But we will not, in return, pay by relinquishing a single inch of any other Palestinian territory.

Any sudden Israeli withdrawal will require important security, political, and economic requisites that need Arab and international support as soon as possible. The Israelis might close the border between Gaza, Israel, and the other Palestinian territories and this will deprive Gaza laborers of job opportunities, necessitating quick economic support for the liberated strip. Any unilateral and sudden Israeli withdrawal from Gaza could be followed by a new Israeli occupation; this would require international backing in the form of forces from the United Nations or from the Arab countries to defend the strip from any attempt to reoccupy it and to consolidate Palestinian legitimacy in it. There is no danger from our people. We are ready for independence and are struggling to end the occupation as soon as possible.

[Abu-Sa'dah] What about U.S. reservations about a unilateral termination of the Israeli occupation?

[Sha'th] The Americans are very worried about a withdrawal being carried out without proper arrangements in Gaza, fearing security developments that they might be unable to control. They also believe that reaching a full agreement constitutes an incentive for all the parties. They fear the negotiations because they look at the issue from their own viewpoint, not ours.

Abu-Sharif Accuses Israelis of Escalating Violence

LD2303102193 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0800 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] Palestinian sources said that, in the face of the escalation of intifadah activities, the Israeli forces have adopted new arbitrary measures, and brought large reinforcements to the occupied territories. Mr. Bassam Abu-Sharif, political adviser to the Palestinian president, yesterday accused the Israeli administration of taking a decision to escalate the terroristic violence against the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Abu-Sharif said that the information available to the Palestinian central committee confirms that the Israeli administration is continuing the escalation through the distribution of firearms to the Israelis and providing them with licences to use them against any Arab. Mr. Abu-Sharif also charged the Security Council and the United States with the responsibility of what is happening inside the occupied territories, and considered that the conditions are accelerating toward a bloody explosion.

Abu-Sharif on Ties With U.S., Negotiations

NC2303093493 Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 17 Mar 93 p 2

[Report by Khalid Salah-al-Din]

[Text] Bassam Abu-Sharif, Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat's media adviser, has asserted that Palestinian-U.S. relations will soon be restored. He also announced that the PLO does not support the call to withdraw from the peace negotiations.

Abu-Sharif said the peace process will continue until international and regional conditions are ripe for a Russian-backed U.S. decision to implement UN Security Council Resolution 242. He announced: Our continuing participation in the negotiations signifies to us a consolidation of the peace process until the desired ripening of the international conditions.

He said: We are governed by international circumstances, particularly the Soviet Union's collapse and the Gulf war. We do not support those who call for boycotting the talks and ending the peace process, because that would fulfill Israel's objectives. This does not mean we must accept every Israeli proposal. We must try to improve conditions. We are not deluding ourselves by imagining that the Palestinian delegation or the other Arab delegations can persuade Israel to do something it has refused to do since 1967. No argument, no matter how logical or well phrased, can persuade [Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq] Rabin to implement this UN resolution. So what's the use of negotiating? Negotiating is an announcement that the peace process will continue until the time is ripe.

President 'Arafat's adviser affirmed that there are signs that relations between the United States and the PLO will be restored. He noted that numerous European countries have begun to restore relations with the PLO and recently Belgium upgraded the PLO office to a legation.

Asked about U.S.-Israeli agreement on a date to return the Palestinian deportees, Abu-Sharif said: Neither we nor any other Arab party has been consulted about this date. This is why the agreement was incomplete. Still, I wish to note that this is the first time Israel has accepted implementing a Security Council resolution and drawing up a timetable to do so. This is a step in the right direction. Resolution 242 is 26 years old and Israel has not implemented it. As for Resolution 799, which calls for the deportees' immediate return, we must state that while we are not satisfied with the U.S.-Israeli arrangements, implementing the resolution over seven months to a year is a step in the right direction.

Bassam Abu-Sharif denounced the role Iran is playing, saying: It wrongfully intervenes in our internal affairs in the name of Islam. We reject this because we do not intervene in its internal affairs.

The Palestinian president's media adviser praised Egypt's role in the peace process under President Hosni Mubarak's leadership. He said Egypt has a special role because Egypt is

the only Arab country that has ties with Israel. He said that Egypt, as an influential country, is more important to the Israelis than Israel is to the Egyptians and that Israel needs its relationship with Egypt more than Egypt needs it. He noted that Egypt is using this leverage to persuade Israel that it has no recourse but to comply with international legality and halt the killings and repression in the occupied territories.

Hurani on Peace Process, Saudi Support, Russian Role

JN2003103093 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 20 Mar 93
p 23

[By 'Awdah 'Awdah]

[Excerpts] PLO Executive Committee Member 'Abdallah Hurani has praised Jordan's stand under his majesty King Husayn toward the deportee issue and participation in the ninth round of peace negotiations.

In an interview with AL-RA'Y in Amman, Hurani said that in general the Arab stand on the next Washington peace negotiations round is linked to the Palestinian stand. [passage omitted]

Hurani denied that the PLO has committed a mistake by agreeing to participate in the peace process. He said: As a PLO member, I cannot say that the PLO has committed a mistake under the circumstances which prevailed in the peace operation at the time. However, accepting certain conditions at a certain time does not mean that these conditions remain a sword brandished over every step we take, and that we cannot try to amend or correct their course.

Hurani added: The peace process is not sacrosanct, meaning it cannot be touched. This operation is subject to the assessment of the negotiations, and when one of the parties—and I speak here of the Palestinian Arab party—finds that the continuation of the peace process runs counter to its interests, it has the right to pause at times, to boycott at others, or ask for amendments here and there.

Hurani said: We must always target the future and not only the present because we are not searching for a solution for the present. We seek a solution for the future. From this premise, we must not allow present circumstances to define the solution for the future.

On the financial crisis from which the PLO is suffering and whether the apology to Saudi Arabia has helped in some way to settling this crisis, Hurani said: Yes, there is a financial crisis whose dimension and details I do not know. What I know is that regular official Arab support has been suspended since the Gulf crisis, and even before it.

He added: As for the Saudi support, the funds collected from the Palestinians and from Saudi citizens there in support of the intifadah are received regularly. As for the support earmarked by the summit conferences, it remains suspended.

Hurani added: As for Palestinian-Saudi relations in particular and Palestinian-Arab relations in general, we in the

PLO are eager to normalize our relations with the Gulf countries as well as with the other Arab countries. We are also eager to put behind us all the results of the Gulf war, whether those affecting the PLO or those affecting Arab solidarity.

Hurani said: We did not commit a mistake so that we might apologise for it. We were advocates of an Arab solution during the Gulf crisis. So were Jordan and other Arab parties. We failed to achieve an Arab solution. The Gulf crisis took place, a crisis that was bigger than all of us. He affirmed that the Palestinian leadership cannot oppose the Palestinian people's will on this issue and the Palestinian popular stand was more than obvious.

On his statement that the Russian role is ineffective and is subservient to the U.S. stand, Hurani said: I did not say that the Russian role is ineffective and is subservient to the U.S. stand as a PLO representative. I said that this is my personal opinion and I have the right to say so while not committing the PLO with these statements. What I want to affirm is that my personal opinion is in line with the Palestinian popular stand. Ask any Palestinian about his opinion of the Russian stand, and you will find that his stand is no different from mine.

Nusaybah on Participation in Talks, Deportee Crisis

JN2203185193 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Arabic 1618
GMT 22 Mar 93

[Telephone interview with Dr. Sari Nusaybah, "head of political committees in the territories" by Qol Yisra'el correspondent Sa'id Mu'addi carried within "With the Evening Events" program; date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Mu'addi] Dr. Sari Nusaybah: Intense contacts and consultations are currently under way with the U.S. Administration to reach an agreement with it before the convening of the next round of talks. Are you for Palestinian participation in the next round of talks before the outstanding problems are resolved?

[Nusaybah] As a matter of fact, the outstanding problems must be resolved. Moreover, it is my belief that we must endeavor to resolve these problems to continue the peace process. You must take into account the fact that the problems existing between us and Israel; that is, the Israeli authorities, are numerous. These problems are not confined to the recent deportations problem. Of course, the deportee issue is a basic, important, and pressing problem. However, we should not forget that ever since these brothers were expelled from the occupied territories, Israel has been carrying out dumbfounding punitive measures in the occupied territories. Through the peace process, we must work to uproot this problem so that we may prevent any repeat of such measures in the future.

[Mu'addi] What are your expectations with regard to the participation or nonparticipation of the Palestinian side in the forthcoming round of negotiations that are scheduled to be held on 20 April?

[Nusaybah] I believe that if we fail to attend the talks on 20 April; that is, if the problem remains unresolved and if the hurdles remain, the hurdles might be resolved later. Consequently, we may take part in the talks at a later stage. I am of the opinion that it is in our best interests, as Palestinians, to make serious efforts to surmount the current difficulties, and consequently to return to the negotiations as soon as possible. I believe that the difficulties must be surmounted. In the same vein, a return to the negotiations must be effected. Concerning the overall political process, I believe that it is still going on. The Palestinian leadership must take all eventualities into account. It must calculate and determine what is in the best interests of the Palestinian people. That is, it must identify achievable and unachievable objectives. It must identify the positive, as well as negative aspects of the whole process. We are in a jungle, and the Palestinians are targeted in this jungle.

[Mu'addi] Dr. Sari Nusaybah: Thank you very much.

[Nusaybah] Thanks. You are most welcome, sir.

Hamas Leaders on Expellees, Talks, Other Issues

JN2203122293 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic
22 Mar 93 p 3

[Text] Amman—AL-DUSTUR—The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, has reiterated its rejection of the phased return of the Palestinian deportees in Marj al-Zuhur in accordance with an agreed timetable. Hamas leaders said that the decision of the movement and of the deportees is either a collective return or steadfastness until death in the al-'Awdah [return] camp in Marj al-Zuhur. They added that this stand aims at not giving legitimacy to the Israeli expulsion decision and at rejecting the policy of double standards practiced by some international quarters which boast about international legitimacy, implementing UN resolutions, and protecting human rights. Hamas called on these quarters to implement Resolution 799, which represents international legitimacy, and to return the expellees to their homeland. Hamas added that this is one of the human rights stipulated by the international charters.

The Hamas leaders were speaking at a closed symposium organized by the Center for Islamic Action Studies and Research and moderated by Bilal Hasan al-Tal, secretary general of the center. They condemned the behind-the-scenes attempts to bypass Resolution 799 through political deals which aim at bypassing the issue of expellees. The Hamas leaders called on the PLO leadership to deal with the issue of expellees as a national issue away from factional accounts.

The Hamas Movement reiterated its call on the PLO leadership to withdraw from the talks, which were described by Hamas speakers at the symposium, as a dark tunnel. They added that the Palestinian president himself admitted this during his meeting with a Hamas delegation in Tunisia. The Hamas leaders announced that the issue of expellees constitutes a legitimate and logical reason for the PLO leadership to withdraw from the talks in protest against the

Israeli policy of expulsion, particularly since polls have shown that 80 percent of Palestinians inside the occupied territory reject resumption of talks while the issue of expellees remains unresolved.

Hamas praised Jordan's stand on the resumption of talks—a stand which links Jordan's participation with that of the Palestinians. Hamas also praised the stand adopted by Palestinian chief delegate Dr. Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi who refused to take part in the ninth round before resolving the issue of deportees.

In the symposium, the Hamas Movement reiterated its stand toward the talks in general. The Hamas leaders said that Hamas has nothing to do with the talks and that the movement underscores its strategic stand rejecting them. The Hamas leaders, who took part in the symposium, said that Hamas' calculations are different from those of the PLO's leadership.

On a possible Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, Hamas announced that it is studying all eventualities concerning the future of Gaza. Hamas added that it is holding contacts with the various Palestinian factions to lay down a united national Palestinian strategy to deal with the various possibilities regarding the future of Gaza.

Regarding the dialogue Hamas held with some Western embassies, the movement announced that it is not against the West, but that the West is hostile to the Islamic nation through its support for the Israeli aggression. The movement added that after Christopher's tour and the attempts that followed to place Hamas on the terrorism list, Hamas was forced to take action to explain to the world that it is a militant national movement, that it has not carried out any operation outside the occupied territory, and that it has not attacked the interests of any country, including the United States.

The Hamas leaders said: We wanted to explain our cause and stand to the world. So, we contacted 10 embassies, including the embassies of the five permanent members. Three embassies responded and agreed that the meetings will be held with the ambassadors. The Hamas leaders added: We announced these meetings because they are political contacts that stem from our stands. We are not ready to make any secret deals.

Hamas denounced the PLO leadership's stand toward Hamas contacts with Western countries. This leadership, the Hamas leaders added, even protested to these countries against their contacts with Hamas. Hamas said: We are a force that exists on the ground and we have the same rights as the other factions. We have a right to contact anybody, except the Israeli enemy. Hamas announced its readiness to continue dialogue with everybody.

On whether Hamas will join the PLO, the movement announced that it wants to join the PLO from the door of democracy and in light of Hamas' size and force, not through the conditions and desire of some who control the PLO. Hamas denounced the mentality which controls the PLO leadership.

Hamas announced that it will work to activate Arab and Islamic concern for the Palestine question and that it will not relinquish an inch of Palestine from the [Mediterranean] Sea to the [Jordan] River.

U.S. Should Deal 'Earnestly' With Palestinians

*LD1903230293 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic
1900 GMT 19 Mar 93*

[Station commentary]

[Text] Brothers, following reports carried by news agencies saying that preliminary talks will be taking place in Washington shortly between American officials and representatives of the various sides who are taking part in the peace process—the talks are meant to be a prelude to convening the ninth round of the peace negotiations on 20 May—and in the middle of news about some Palestinian-American contacts to discuss a meeting to be devoted to discussing the obstacles which still stand in the way of Palestinian participation in the ninth round, a spokesman of the U.S. State Department two days ago hastened to confirm what these news agencies have been saying. At the same time he confirmed that fixing the times for the preliminary talks has not yet been decided.

The preliminary talks which were announced earlier this month by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher are not merely protocol talks or a routine measure to precede the convening of the ninth round but they are to be talks based on establishing the principle of resuming the negotiations on schedule; bearing in mind that the Palestinian side as previously announced is still adamant about not joining the talks until the causes of its withdrawal have been removed.

The other Arab sides taking part in the peace process have not told Washington about their official agreement to attend. They are waiting for the results of the coming Damascus meeting on 28 March.

This is on the one hand; on the other hand these preliminary talks may directly or indirectly point to the new American role in the peace process to which Washington has given the slogan of "the full partner."

From the Palestinian point of view to, say the least, the results of the Clinton-Rabin summit did not provide any indication that such a role would be a significant change in the path of the negotiations, particularly when Washington until now continues to ignore the Palestinian stand and the obstacles which the Palestinians believe should be removed. These are foremost the issue of the deportees, the worsening conditions in the occupied territories, and the bases which must confirm the continuation of the negotiations in an effective way.

With this background in mind, it would not be surprising if the dates for holding the preliminary meetings in Washington are postponed. Fixing a time would mean more embarrassment whether for Washington who would not in this case guarantee the agreement of all the sides or the Arab sides who cannot predict the results of the Damascus

meeting on 28 March. This is on the one hand; on the other hand these sides are not eager to reject the American invitation.

In our opinion, if the United States is concerned about the participation of the Palestinian side in the coming round of the negotiations at the fixed date and if it is also concerned about convening preliminary talks and about giving them a push forward, the requirements for this would mean American readiness to deal earnestly with the Palestinian stand. I should discuss the obstacles to which the Palestinian side is referring and which should be solved before fixing the date for the preliminary talks. To continue to ignore the Palestinian stand is not going to serve the peace process.

Rabin 'Got More Than He Asked For' From U.S.

*PM2203164793 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in
Arabic 17 Mar 93 p 11*

[Editorial: "Israel's True Friend"]

[Text] Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin has concluded his visit to Washington and returned to Tel Aviv to tell the Israelis that "they have a true friend in the White House." That is literally what he said at his joint news conference with U.S. President Clinton at the end of their official talks.

If we examine the declared results achieved by Rabin for his government and people, we would understand that sense of elation. The U.S. President confirmed the deal reached by Secretary of State Warren Christopher and the Israeli Government on a phased repatriation of the deportees, thus circumventing Resolution 799. He also reaffirmed his support for Israel's qualitative superiority in the Arab region and his eagerness to maintain the "unique relationship" between Washington and Tel Aviv.

In other words, Rabin got more than he asked for from the new U.S. Administration. He secured the continued flow of financial and military aid plus absolute support for his government's position in the current peace negotiations.

That U.S. position cannot possibly be a cause for optimism about the success of the peace negotiations due to start in Washington 20 April. Several Arab parties to these negotiations had expected the U.S.-Israeli meeting to eliminate the obstacles hampering the resumption of the negotiations, such as the obstacles related to the deportees issue and the six points the Palestinian delegation submitted to the U.S. secretary of state during his recent tour of the region, including the issue of Jerusalem and the call for a clear Israeli pledge that it would finally end the policy of deportation. Clinton's assertion that the deportees issue was not on the agenda was an insult to Arab feelings, denoting disregard for the Arabs and their participation in the negotiations and complete support for the Israeli stance in this connection.

The U.S. President, no doubt, should be excused for taking such a stance toward the Arabs and their demands. He knows, on the basis of the experiences of all former U.S.

Administrations, that the Arabs cannot impose their views nor use their enormous economic resources in this connection. The U.S. Administrations have been used to utter Arab obedience. The only mutiny came from Iraq, and that led to a third world war in which some Arabs sided with the American aggressors. Edward Sa'id, the Arab author, exposed this fact in a lecture he delivered in London when he said that UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus-Ghali told him during a lengthy meeting that, through his envoys, he had tried but failed to persuade Israel to implement the Security Council resolution on the deportees immediately, that he had asked the Security Council to take measures against Israel to give its resolutions some credibility, and that ball was now in the Arab court. In other words, without some Arab action nothing would happen, but the Arabs have not acted and they have not even thrown the ball out of their court. They have put no pressure on the American ally, and Israel has found a way out of the dilemma.

The only honorable stand came from the Palestinians who refused to accept the invitation to the negotiations and insisted on the repatriation of the deportees and on an Israeli pledge to abandon the deportation policy completely. The other Arab parties have preferred to wait before taking a similar step. We hope that they will not wait long. After the completely pro-Israel and anti-Arab

position taken by the United States, as Rabin's talks in Washington have demonstrated, there is only one option left: Support for the Palestinian stance which should become the collective Arab stance.

Candidates for Ambassadorship to Jordan Profiled

PM2303141993 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 18 Mar 93 p 3

[Unattributed report: "Hani al-Hasan Strongest Candidate for Post of Ambassador in Amman"]

[Text] Amman, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT— An informed Palestinian source has told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that Fatah Central Committee Member Hani al-Hasan is the strongest candidate for the post of Palestinian ambassador to Jordan in place of al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim.

The names of 'Abbas Zaki, a Fatah leadership member, and 'Azzam al-Ahmad, Palestinian ambassador in Baghdad, have also been mentioned as possible candidates for the post of ambassador in Amman.

It has been claimed that Ambassador al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim's replacement or transfer to another post is a consequence of increasing differences between him and some Palestinian leaders.

Algeria

'Hundreds of Thousands' Demonstrate Against Violence

NC2203145893 Paris AFP in English 1416 GMT
22 Mar 93

[Text] Algiers, March 22 (AFP)—Hundreds of thousands of Algerians demonstrated Monday in several cities against Islamic fundamentalist violence, the first such public gatherings allowed since a state of emergency was declared in February 1992.

In Algiers, the demonstrators, chanting "Save Algeria from terrorism," grew in number as they proceeded from the old city's Martyrs Square and formed a procession two to three kilometers long. In a symbolic gesture, they chose a route used by the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) during its marches often marked with violence.

The demonstrators brandished banners calling on the government not to negotiate with the militants and asking to know the "whole truth" about the June 1992 assassination of President Mohamed Boudiaf.

A large number of police officers stood discreetly on the sidelines to protect the demonstrators who included women and teenagers. Islamic militants had warned in leaflets posted in several mosques of attacks against the marchers. No incidents were reported two hours after the demonstration began.

Several similar demonstrations were being held in other cities throughout the country. In Constantine, a city east of Algiers which has a large number of Islamic militants, about 50,000 people demonstrated. Among them were many women, some wearing the traditional Muslim veil.

Monday's demonstrations marked the first public gatherings allowed since the state of emergency was called after the army had intervened to cancel legislative elections that the FIS—now banned—was poised to win.

In the past week, three prominent political figures have been assassinated in attacks attributed by authorities to Islamic militants who have denied any involvement in the murders.

Last Tuesday, Djilali Liabes, a former minister of higher education and later director of the institute of global strategy, was killed as he left his home in one of the capital's Islamic strongholds.

The same day, Labour Minister Tahar Hamdi narrowly escaped an assassination attempt in which his bodyguard was killed.

Two members of the National Consultative Council, Hedi Flici, and Hafid Senhadri, also were killed last week.

On Sunday five policemen were injured during an ambush attack by a dozen men in the Sidi Ali Bounab forest, east of Algiers.

The government has fought back against these attacks with massive arrests and harsh sentences including capital punishment.

Authorities announced Monday that 900 people, including four women, have been arrested since a new anti-terrorism law went into effect in December.

A total of about 3,500 people have been arrested since the state of emergency was declared.

Interior Minister Hardi Interviewed on Situation

PM1903140193 London AL-WASAT in Arabic
15-21 Mar 93 pp 18-21

[Interview with Algerian Interior Minister Mohamed Hardi by Faysal Jallul in Algiers; date not given]

[Excerpts] [Jallul] Amnesty International's recent report talks about increasing human rights violations in Algeria and stresses that torture is practiced on a large scale against detainees. What is your opinion of these accusations?

[Hardi] I was surprised by what was said in Amnesty International's recent report. I am one of those who believe that we have this organization to thank for defending human rights throughout the world. Thus it is incumbent on the rulers in all countries to assist it in carrying out its mission in a good manner. I always believed it was my duty to reply to the written communications the organization sent me on several occasions.

I was surprised by what was mentioned in the report you referred to, because it does not correspond to the present Algerian reality. And I strongly reject the talk about torture. This is because as far as we are concerned, torture is a barbaric action severely punishable by law. We reject torture for reasons related to our national identity, because we are a people who suffered a great deal from torture (during the colonial period), and the rulers in Algeria cannot in any way countenance such practices, which conflict with our national character. But if there are excesses, we devote great attention to them and pursue those responsible for them without hesitation. Every time I discovered any excesses, I punished those responsible severely. [passage omitted]

[Jallul] What truth is there in the reports that so far 1,000 people have been detained without trial in the south of the country?

[Hardi] Yes, that is true. Certain measures have been taken against a group or number of destructive people since the enforcement of the state of emergency in February 1992. These measures led to the administrative detention of people like those you refer to. I was not in government at the time. This government (headed by Belaid Abdessalam) took a decision to release the people who are not subject to punishment by law and refer the others to court. So our government released most of the detainees except the cases regarded as very dangerous. We have closed all prisons except two: one we are trying to empty gradually and the other we are seeking to retain pending the results of the current investigations in order to bring charges against the

detainees, of whom there is a total of 850 to 900. What is important is that our government has taken a certain political decision to close these prisons.

[Jallul] What truth is there in the claim that you resort to precautionary detentions?

[Hardi] No, not at all. Precautionary detention was used only during the large-scale operation, which was carried out in very special circumstances, as the matter concerned the safety of our institutions and their stability. Algerian law is very severe in this connection, including the antiterrorist law passed at the end of last year. It precisely specifies the period of detention by security organs before the defendant is handed over to the judge investigating the case.

[Jallul] Algerian newspapers mentioned the arrest of Yakhluuf al-Sharati [as transliterated] (one of the Salvation Front's secret leaders), but you have not confirmed this officially.

[Hardi] I confirm it to you. He was arrested a few days ago. [passage omitted]

[Jallul] How long will the state of emergency continue in Algeria?

[Hardi] There is no limit. When favorable conditions exist to enable our institutions to operate naturally and people to exercise their freedoms normally, the need for the state of emergency will disappear.

[Jallul] Without doubt you know that the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] represents more than 3 million voters. You have drawn up a plan to separate armed FIS elements from its environment and supporters. What are the most marked elements of this plan?

[Hardi] I do not know what plan you mean. However, our assessment of the situation is as follows: The general situation in our country can be summed up by saying that the parties in general—not just FIS—cannot take possession of citizens. There is estrangement between the political class in general, regardless of the parties it is composed of, and citizens at large, just like the estrangement which used to exist between the rulers and the ruled and between the administration and the subordinate. We are working to tackle this crisis of trust and to help our people to restore hope and believe in their state. This state has to be strong in order to lead the democratic march. But strength here does not mean oppression, but, rather, firmly establishing moral qualities for the state and fair conduct toward all citizens. This is why our government believes that the basic component of our policy is social justice. [passage omitted]

With regard to FIS, we differentiate between those who resorted to arms for the sake of seizing power and those who have beliefs and are struggling within the framework of respect for the laws to defend their views and social plans. We respect the latter and have nothing against them.

[Jallul] By that are you alluding to Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], Ennahda, or FIS?

[Hardi] I am talking about supporters of the outlawed FIS. The more they respect the laws of the republic and refuse to use arms against their society, the more I respect them and believe that they have the full right to express their views and to struggle to defend their ideas. Then we can begin to work on the democratic process. I hope that that will be done as soon as possible. As far as we are concerned, it is important to differentiate between the parties which are playing the (political) game within the framework of the laws and respect for the views of others and those which want to seize power by intimidation and by imposing their view and plan on the people. That is completely unacceptable, whether it emanates from Muslim fundamentalists or other political tendencies in the country. [passage omitted]

[Jallul] You conducted an investigation into the attempt on the life of Major General Khaled Nezzar, defense minister and member of the Higher State Council. May we know the results of this investigation?

[Hardi] The investigation is still continuing. That is all I can say at present.

[Jallul] Have the early stages of the investigation enabled you to ascertain that FIS is actually responsible for this attempt?

[Hardi] It is a terrorist action. We rely on a basic rule in such cases, namely not to accuse anyone until the investigation has been completed. [passage omitted]

[Jallul] Did you ascertain from the investigations with the detainees that Iran is implicated in supporting armed Islamists?

[Hardi] I told you (before the interview) that we do not talk about our relations with foreign states in public. This stems from Algeria's traditions in international relations.

[Jallul] In any case, you have reduced Iranian diplomatic representation to one person.

[Hardi] It is a telling signal. But we always abstain from making accusations when it comes to a foreign state, because we always want relations to be serious and wise, regardless of the difficult conditions they are experiencing. [passage omitted]

[Jallul] You agreed with Tunis to demarcate the border. Do you hope to increase cooperation with the Tunisian authorities to fight extremist Islamists on both sides?

[Hardi] The two aspects of the question should be separated. This is because the brotherly and traditional cooperation with Tunis has nothing to do with combating terrorism. We have spent 10 years of steady work on demarcating the border between the two countries. Cooperation against terrorism was decided at the Arab interior ministers' conference held in Tunis early last January. All the Arab states decided to cooperate in this domain after they realized that the terrorism phenomenon is not limited to Tunisia, Egypt, and Algeria. If this phenomenon has an internal dimension, it also has an international dimension.

This is because the terrorists are seeking to create confusion in the Islamic nation, especially in the Arab homeland, which constitutes the nucleus of the Islamic nation. And in the Arab world there are the two pivots of the [Arab] east and the [Arab] Maghreb, that is Algeria and Egypt. In Tunis the Arab interior ministers reached a conviction that no Arab country is safe from this phenomenon.

[Jallul] What is the scale of the involvement of the Algerian "Afghans" (that is those who fought alongside the Afghan Mujahidin against the Soviets) in armed operations?

[Hardi] Those are the ones who do the greatest harm. And the way in which they carry out their actions has nothing to do with the Islamic traditions of our Algerian society. This is because even during the ugliest moments we experienced in the liberation war against imperialism, Algerians never used the kind of violence used by the Algerian "Afghans." The hatred planted in their hearts is translated into barbaric actions that are beyond description. And this conflicts with our traditions.

FIS Calls For Increased Opposition Against Regime

LD2203105293 Tehran IRNA in English 1033 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] Athens, March 22, IRNA—The banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in Algeria has called on the mujahideen to "increase resistance and opposition," against the Army-backed regime.

A statement issued by FIS spokesman in Europe, Rabeh Kebir, said "we tell to the families of the martyrs to show patience as your abode is paradise, and tell to mujahideen to increase opposition and resistance."

Statement Number 4 in Arabic, faxed to IRNA from Germany Monday, said "we advise all who committed a mistake by cooperating with the unjust group, whether in the armed forces or outside it, to seek immediate penance from this grave mistake and to turn as helpers to the people against this illegal band."

It appealed to "all those sincere to their religion and country to participate to bring down this tyrant group and to bring it into account for what it has committed against the rights of the people of Algeria and against its religion and country."

FIS was on the verge of winning general elections last year, when the military-backed regime with the support of the West cancelled the elections, banned the popular Islamic party and jailed and tortured thousands of Islamists.

'Sabotage' Reported in Blida Province

LD2203031793 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2300 GMT 21 Mar 93

[Text] A source close to the security services in Blida Province pointed out on 21 March that several acts of sabotage occurred against several public institutions in the last five days in Blida Province. Mahfoudh reports.

[Mahfoudh] Among these acts of sabotage were the ones on 17 March that were aimed at a storage unit belonging to the Edipal enterprise, where 135 million centimes were stolen. On 19 March, the Erriyadh complex in Blida was subjected to an act of sabotage by 10 armed terrorists, resulting in the partial disabling of seven trucks, while fire was set to an administrative building and two trucks. The authorities estimated the losses at about 200 million centimes.

The same source said the District unit in l'Arbaa district was subjected to arson by unidentified persons; losses were estimated at about 20 million centimes. The industrial park in the municipality of Oued Smala was subjected to a similar crime that resulted in the burning of two buses, two tractors, a truck, and storage equipment. Losses at the park were estimated at 2 billion centimes. Markets in Ouled Chbil and Ben Chaabane were subjected to acts of arson by unidentified men; total losses were estimated at 550 million centimes.

Egypt

Mubarak Returns From Saudi Arabian Visit

NC2203063093 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0500 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] President Muhammad Husni Mubarak returned to the homeland from Saudi Arabia at dawn today after a two-day visit during which he performed the minor pilgrimage on the Night of Revelation in Holy Mecca. He also paid a visit to Medina, where he performed prayers at the Prophet's Mosque and visited the Prophet's tomb, may peace and God's prayers be upon him. During the visit, the president held two round of talks with Saudi King Fahd Bin-'Abd- al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques. The talks focused on a number of current Arab and international issues. The two also reviewed ways of consolidating relations between the two fraternal countries.

Musa Comments on Visit

NC2203165093 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1535 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 22 Mar (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has described the talks President Mubarak held during his recent visit to Saudi Arabia as comprehensive, adding that they dealt with the situation in the Arab world, the peace process, and relations between Egypt and Saudi Arabia and ways to bolster them.

Commenting on the visit, Musa added that other issues that concern Arabs and the two countries were also discussed.

Asked about the escalation in the occupied territories and the effect it might have on the peace talks, Musa said this escalation is a serious problem added to the ones already casting their shadow on the peace process. He stressed that these escalation measures must be stopped so that the peace process can resume in a more favorable atmosphere.

On top of the Palestinian deportees issue, these escalation measures tell us that we have to act swiftly to remove all the obstacles and provide a more favorable atmosphere for the talks scheduled for April, Musa said.

He reiterated that Egypt continues its contacts to find a solution to the deportees issue. He noted that the foreign ministers of the five states [involved in the peace talks] will discuss this problem during their meeting in Damascus on 28 March.

Musa noted that Afghan envoy 'Abdol Sattar Sirat delivered a message to President Mubarak from the Afghan president on the situation in Afghanistan, the agreement signed recently, and the future situation in light of potential dangers.

Musa Interviewed on Resumption of Talks

NC1903194093 London MBC Television in Arabic 1735 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Interview with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa by MBC correspondent Mu'tazz al-Damardash in Cairo; date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Al-Damardash] [Words indistinct] link between the deportees and the resumption of the peace negotiations?

[Musa] We do not link the two. The issue depends on the desire of the representatives of the Palestinian people and the representatives of the Syrian, Jordanian, and Lebanese Governments. They are the negotiators in the bilateral talks. However, we believe the situation calls for expediting the negotiating process. In addition, Israel needs to adopt positive stands on the process.

The negotiating process requires a suitable atmosphere. The deportation issue and keeping the deportees abroad is an impediment to this atmosphere. Hence, the Egyptian diplomacy's endeavors to remove the deportee issue from the peace road. We hope that within the next few weeks we will be able to work out a solution to the deportee issue so that the peace process can resume in an atmosphere conducive to achieving progress on the four courses.

[Al-Damardash] There was an Egyptian advisory delegation. Has the delegation's task ended?

[Musa] We are around and not in the negotiating process. We have representatives in Washington. We also follow up the situation in Cairo. Our contacts are being held through official and direct personal exchanges with the Israelis, Americans, and Europeans.

[Al-Damardash] Can we say the delegation is still active?

[Musa] Our experts are carrying out concerted efforts, and they are following up the situation closely and on all fronts so that we will be ready to give services that would enable us reach a peaceful solution and a just settlement.

[Al-Damardash] Is it true the negotiations will resume in April?

[Musa] Yes, of course. I expect them to, and I hope it will happen because we are negotiating to regain the land. When the negotiating process stops, it means a delay in regaining the land, a delay to the start of the transition stage in the Palestinian territory, and a delay in achieving Arab rights and a peaceful settlement. This delay would mean delaying the settlement of the occupied territories. This, however, should not mean that we must solve the problem at any price. This could happen through just and positive negotiations. It does not mean we hold negotiations for negotiations' sake or make provisions for provisions' sake or hold talks for talks. The issue must be based on a logical, objective, and clear-cut framework. I mean here land for peace.

[Al-Damardash] Is Egypt in full agreement with the other Arab countries on the negotiating process?

[Musa] Yes. We are in full agreement on the framework, basis, and objective of the negotiations process. UN Resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of land for peace are the framework. These resolutions, the principles of international law, and the need for [Israeli] withdrawal in accordance with the principle of the inadmissibility of seizure of territories through war are the basis. The objective is to reach a peaceful and just settlement in accordance with the principles of international legitimacy and to establish a just peace. In other words, we should soon reach a situation that will enable us to close this file, which cannot be closed if any of the territories are still occupied, if the Palestinian people's rights continue to be ignored, or if the situation remains as it is; that is, there is no peace but a calm phase. Calmness alone is not enough. The absence of confrontation does not mean we can guarantee that there will be no confrontation in the future. What will prevent future confrontations and the reopening of this file is the attainment of a just settlement based on the principles of international law; namely, the inadmissibility of the seizure of territories through war, respect for the Palestinian people's rights in the same way as the rights of all other peoples are respected, and security for everybody, including Israel. Total [withdrawal] in return for total [peace] is the framework for establishing peace and normal relations.

[Al-Damardash] Do you believe an Arab country can, for example, precede other Arab countries in reaching a bilateral agreement with Israel?

[Musa] Look. You can raise such a question in theory but in practice you find that the situation is different. Why? Because we are solving a problem that has existed for several decades. You cannot solve it in one or two sessions. It takes time. Meanwhile, while it is taking this time, and security procedures, withdrawal, establishment of peace, etc., are agreed on—let us say for example, on the Syrian or Lebanese fronts—we find that when it comes to the Palestinian front, a number of years have been set for the transitional period. Then, in the third year of the transitional period, the negotiations for the final phase will start; that is, the final Palestinian-Israeli agreement. The time taken on the Syrian, Lebanese, and Jordanian fronts will

be almost equal to the time the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations will take. Any progress on any one of the fronts should not be regarded as damaging to the other fronts. There must be progress. It is preferable that progress is made on all fronts—that is between Syria and Israel, Lebanon and Israel, the Palestinians and Israel, and Jordan and Israel. Therefore there is no harm in having progress on any one of the fronts. If it does happen and Israel makes a tempting and acceptable offer based on the principles of international law, we cannot ask the Arab party to say: No, don't withdraw from my territories. At the same time, the final peace and the closure of the file cannot be achieved before all the fronts end with agreements.

[Al-Damardash] One final question. In your view, where is the Arab-Israeli negotiations process heading now?

[Musa] The negotiations process—that is, the bilateral talks—is scheduled to be resumed on 20 April. Some of the multilateral talks will precede the bilateral talks, or held simultaneously, or held later. The multilateral talks involve the economy, refugees, disarmament, water, and environment. All these talks are scheduled to resume in April. We hope progress will be made on the basis of the principle of land in return for peace. There are no doubts about this principle. The most important thing is that the negotiations be conducted seriously. Another important thing is that none of the parties should have a desire to negotiate for the sake of just saying: Oh yes, the Arabs and the Israelis are talking to each other. This is not enough. This might have served a purpose in a past; that is, the Madrid process. We are now at a stage that requires serious negotiations. It requires an offer from Israel that could constitute a basis for negotiations. The Arab side is, of course, now ready to negotiate seriously. We are sure of that. We have repeatedly said that land for peace means the return of the territories and reaching peaceful relations in the Middle East. We hope when the negotiations resume in April, all the cards will be ready and the offers will be positive and acceptable so we can continue our efforts; we need progress in 1993.

'Abd-al-Rahman on NY Blast, Islamic Issues

PM2203141593 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
18 Mar 93 p 6

[Interview with Egyptian cleric Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman by Jamal Khashuqi in Los Angeles; date not given]

[Excerpts] [Khashuqi] When did you hear about the World Trade Center explosion, where were you when it occurred, and what was your reaction?

['Abd-al-Rahman] I was in Michigan. I heard about it the following day. I did not have any particular reaction, but I felt kind of pessimistic and felt that some Muslims might be accused with a view to placing obstacles in the way of the da'wah [Islamic call] in the United States. [passage omitted]

[Khashuqi] Although you have openly condemned the incident and issued a statement to that effect, some people charge that you instigated it through your lectures in which you strongly criticized U.S. foreign policy, and that the suspects understood your words to be a blessing for action against the United States. What is your comment on that?

['Abd-al-Rahman] I am not the only one who criticizes U.S. foreign policy. Its enemies and friends do that, so why should I not do the same? That charge implies censorship of opinion, like telling me: You should not express an opinion on everything, otherwise you will be accused of incitement. That is a threat to freedom of opinion.

[Khashuqi] As a religious scholar, would you issue an edict for any group struggling for a just cause to resort to terrorism, such as hijacking planes, holding hostages, and using explosives indiscriminately? What is the shari'ah [Islamic law] rule on such actions?

['Abd-al-Rahman] Every victim of aggression tries to defend himself and in doing so he must use every method he deems fit to win his rights provided he does not attack any civilian who has not fought the Muslims and provided he does not attack women, children, and innocent people, but he is entitled to do anything to the aggressor that would have an effect and that make him concede the rights of others.

[Khashuqi] Does that include hijacking planes and taking hostages?

['Abd-al-Rahman] That would not be right if the plane was civilian. As I said, Islam does not permit aggression against civilians. The same applies to explosions which hurt civilians. That is not right and not permissible under the shari'ah.

[Khashuqi] What is your connection with the al-Salam Mosque in New Jersey, said to be the center of extremist activities?

['Abd-al-Rahman] I go there like all other Muslims. It is an ordinary Islamic mosque.

[Khashuqi] What is the legal connection between naturalized American Muslims and the U.S. Government, and are you considered the guardian of these Muslims?

['Abd-al-Rahman] There is no difference between naturalized and resident Muslims. They come under the American state because once they enter the country or immigrate, a pledge and a contract of security emerge between them and the state, and they must honor that pledge. Almighty God said: "Honor the pledge for a pledge is a responsibility" [Koranic verse]. When one applies for a visa, one is in effect saying: I accept your system and your laws and I will not break them. As far as I am concerned, I want a free land from where to combat the [Egyptian] regime (...) and I would not do anything that would deprive me of that freedom.

[Khashuqi] There is a group of young people around you. They seem to love you, serve you, do what you ask, and attend your lectures. Is there an organization and an amir?

[Abd-al-Rahman] Does every religious scholar loved by the Muslims have an organization? There are thousands of ulema [religious scholars] surrounded by young people who love them and learn from them. Some have many more young people around them than me. Whoever claims that this means the existence of an organization actually wants to cause anxiety and create fear of Muslim ulema and claim that they form organizations to subvert and harm the state where they live.

[Khashuqji] Does that mean that there is an al-Jama'ah Islamiyah [Islamic Group] organization in the United States?

[Abd-al-Rahman] There is no al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah organization here in the United States nor even in Egypt. The judiciary has repudiated all these charges. They are just young people who uphold their religion and defend their rights.

[Khashuqji] If the explosives charge against Muhammad Salamah was proved, would you rebuke him?

[Abd-al-Rahman] Why should I say anything to him? I have nothing to do with him. That is a crime committed by a person who will be punished under the law. I have nothing to do with the matter.

[Khashuqji] Do you know any of the suspects in the case, such as Muhammad Salamah, Ibrahim al-Jabruni, and Nidal 'Ayyad?

[Abd-al-Rahman] I do not know any of them. Perhaps they prayed at the mosque as I did.

[Khashuqji] As you have criticized the bombing of the World Trade Center, why do you not issue a statement warning Muslim youth against rash action and terrorist actions such as that?

[Abd-al-Rahman] I will not issue such a statement. That is the responsibility of those who are in charge of Islam in the United States.

[Khashuqji] Would you support a statement to that effect issued by the Islamic leaderships in the United States?

[Abd-al-Rahman] Yes, if such a statement is submitted to me I would support it but, not being in charge, I cannot issue such a statement.

[Khashuqji] What do you think of that case? Who, in your view, was behind it?

[Abd-al-Rahman] I do not wish to speculate. It is better to leave that to the investigating authorities.

[Khashuqji] Why did you come to the United States?

[Abd-al-Rahman] Just as I traveled to Switzerland, Denmark, and Sweden, I have come to the United States, to defend the general cause of Islam and combat the regime.

[Khashuqji] Have you applied for political asylum in the United States, and why?

[Abd-al-Rahman] That is the lawyer's task. I had a green card but they withdrew it.

[Khashuqji] In your Islamic lectures you criticize those who apply Western democracy and join its parliaments but you yourself accept U.S. laws and apply them.

[Abd-al-Rahman] I have not applied American laws. I preserve a system of government. As I said before, it [the United States] accepted me as an immigrant and my intention was to expose the regime (...). I have not accepted U.S. laws but I am honoring a pledge as Islam dictates that I should.

[Khashuqji] After the explosion you made a tour of the United States. Was that to explain your position on the incident?

[Abd-al-Rahman] That is wrong. I started my tour before the incident, which has not affected it in any way. It was an ordinary tour made for the purpose of visiting Islamic centers, meeting Muslims, and promoting the cause of Islam. [passage omitted]

[Khashuqji] If granted political asylum, would you settle in the United States?

[Abd-al-Rahman] I want to settle any place where I can carry out my work of propagating the cause of Islam and carrying out my mission. God's land is vast. [passage omitted]

[Khashuqji] Were you a member of the Muslim Brotherhood [in Egypt]?

[Abd-al-Rahman] No.

[Khashuqji] Did you issue an edict calling for the assassination of former President Anwar al-Sadat?

[Abd-al-Rahman] I issued no such edict. This is confirmed by the court verdict which found me innocent. Did killing al-Sadat require an edict?

[Khashuqji] In reply to a previous question you said that there was no organization called al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah in Egypt. Why, and how did you arrive at the conclusion?

[Abd-al-Rahman] That is what I believe. I think that those are a group of young people defending their rights.

[Khashuqji] Do you know of any amir [leader] of al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah?

[Abd-al-Rahman] Many people claim that I am the amir of al-Jama'ah, but I do not know how I came to be that in the presence of the strict government control.

[Khashuqji] It has been claimed that there is a dispute between you and 'Abbud al-Zumur (who plotted al-Sadat's assassination) over the amirship of al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah. How true is that?

[Abd-al-Rahman] There are no differences whatsoever. Brother 'Abbud is an honorable and an active member of al-Jama'ah. Those who speak of such differences are trying to drive a wedge between friends.

[Khashuqji] Why are your relations with the Muslim Brotherhood tense?

['Abd-al-Rahman] That is not true. There is no tension at all. I do not like to criticize the Brotherhood or any other Islamic group. I sometimes answer questions in my classes when asked about the Brotherhood or anyone else.

[Khashuqji] What do you think of the Brotherhood's line?

['Abd-al-Rahman] They have their own views and their own plans. I might agree with them on some things and disagree on other things. The most important points on which we disagree are their application to become a political party subject to the regime and the parties committee, and also their participation in the elections and entry into the People's Assembly. On that I disagree with them. [passage omitted]

[Khashuqji] The Copts complain that they are now persecuted in Egypt because of the Islamists' attacks on them and on their churches. What is your comment on that?

['Abd-al-Rahman] There is no minority which enjoys the same rights as the Christian minority in Egypt. Anyone who denies that is pursuing selfish aims. Historical and current facts confirm that there is no persecution of Christians. We tell the wise and fair among them to admit that, for they know that their rights have been protected since the Islamic conquest. [passage omitted]

[Khashuqji] Is the assassination of tourists a strategy of al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah aimed at undermining tourism?

['Abd-al-Rahman] I do not speak for al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah but I say that when they attack the tourists, these young men are actually targeting tourism. Nobody says that tourists should be killed, although some of them offend Islamic ethics and they see tourism as nightclubs, alcohol, gambling, and enjoying the women of the countries they visit. Had they respected the laws of the country they would have been respected themselves. My observation regarding these incidents is that these young people want to destroy tourism in order to embarrass the government abroad.

[Khashuqji] No tourist should be killed for that objective and message.

['Abd-al-Rahman] It may be wrong, but how can we weep for one male or female tourist and not weep for hundreds of thousands of oppressed people.

[Khashuqji] Al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah has threatened to hit foreign investments in Egypt. That would harm the interests of ordinary Egyptian citizens and add to their economic problems. What is your comment on that?

['Abd-al-Rahman] The people must participate in what is in the interest of the country and the religion. That is everyone's responsibility, including ordinary people from other groups.

[Khashuqji] Regarding the explosion in the cafe in al-Tahrir square, al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah claimed responsibility for that operation then another statement was issued denying that. How do you explain that contradiction?

['Abd-al-Rahman] The young men did not claim responsibility for the operations. They issued a statement, copies of which reached the United States, denying any involvement. When the cafe explosion occurred the New York explosion occurred on the same day and there was another explosion in London, which indicates that there is an international plot bigger than the capabilities of these young people. [passage omitted]

[Khashuqji] Have you visited Iran?

['Abd-al-Rahman] No.

[Khashuqji] Would you visit it if you received an invitation?

['Abd-al-Rahman] I would think about it and consider what results such a visit would produce. [passage omitted]

[Khashuqji] Once again we see you cooperating with people with whom you disagree ideologically, such as Shaykh Hasan al-Turabi in Sudan, with whose views and calls for renewal you do not agree. Why is that?

['Abd-al-Rahman] Hasan al-Turabi and the Sudanese Government are just an open regime which wants to apply Islam. They have fought (Sudanese People's Liberation Movement's Leader John) Garang and they struggled until they defeated him and split his ranks. They also imposed the veil and prohibited usury.

[Khashuqji] Have you met with Shaykh Hasan in Khartoum?

['Abd-al-Rahman] No, I have not met him. [passage omitted]

'Arafat To Visit Cairo 28 Mar; Envoy Comments

NC2303150793 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1353 GMT
23 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 23 Mar (MENA)—Palestinian sources in Cairo said today that Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat will arrive in Cairo on 28 March for talks with President Husni Mubarak and ranking officials on various Arab and international developments, particularly the question of Palestine.

On the other hand, Palestinian ambassador in Cairo Sa'id Kamal stated that this visit acquires special importance since it takes place before President Husni Mubarak's tour of many European capitals and his expected meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton in the first meeting between an Arab leader and the U.S. President.

Kamal said that the Palestinian president will present the Palestinian stand on the resumption of the peace talks. He will also exchange viewpoints with President Mubarak on the issue of the Palestinian deportees, its developments, and means to restore Arab solidarity within the framework of coordination between the two sides.

Paper Urges Rabin To Halt 'Savage' Campaigns*NC2103080093 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0715 GMT
21 Mar 93*

[Text] Cairo, 21 Mar (MENA)—AL-AHRAM regrets the decision of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin to cut short his visit to the United States and return to Israel to violently confront the intifadah in the occupied territories, especially in Gaza and Jerusalem. It also regrets the Israeli interior minister's intensification of the barbaric campaigns and his determination to exact revenge on the people of the occupied territories for any Israeli who is killed.

Today's editorial says: This reckless statement reflects an attitude that surpasses the Israeli army's frenzied attacks on the inhabitants of the Khan Yunus camp. The statement provides an incentive and encouragement for these forces to continue their ugly bloody campaigns against innocent people who are armed with nothing but stones.

AL-AHRAM adds: Revenge, as advocated by the Israeli interior minister, cannot be the policy of governments but is surely a barbaric frenzy that totally controls those crazy people who are hell-bent on repression and blood and who are blinded by the thirst for revenge, motivated in this by racial superiority. This tendency becomes more grave when it is advocated by people who occupy responsible executive positions in the ruling occupation authority.

The paper concludes by saying: Rather than talking about expected breakthroughs merely to flatter the United States to obtain from it as many benefits as he can and then revert back to his old policy as his predecessors had done before, Rabin should work seriously to stop the savage and unequal campaigns that are only inflaming the situation further.

Palestinian Refusal To Attend Talks Supported*NC2303095093 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2150 GMT
22 Mar 93*

[Text] Cairo, 22 Mar (MENA)—AL-AHRAM stresses that the Palestinian stand of making their participation in the next round of the peace talks contingent on the return of all the deportees is not a deviation from international legitimacy but, on the contrary, is a clear attempt to abide by it.

In an editorial to be published in its issue tomorrow [23 March], the paper says that this stand requires backing and encouragement and is not a denunciation or rebuke as U.S. President Bill Clinton said. In his recent news conference, Clinton spoke in a way that resembles a threat that the Palestinians might be bypassed if their delegation does not return to Washington on 20 April, the date set for the start of the 9th round of the peace negotiations.

AL-AHRAM adds: This U.S. talk implies a sort of coercion and arm twisting that casts doubts on the desire of the strongest country in the world to uphold international legitimacy. This may be an underlying factor in the failure of the negotiations process in the future. How can one be assured of Israel's commitment to any settlement that

might be reached in the negotiations when the sponsor country itself apparently does not care whether Israel complies with a single UN resolution on a secondary issue? What will its position be when it comes to the original resolutions that deal with the major issues?

Concluding, the paper says: It is not fair to burden the Palestinians with a problem created by others. This is their most basic right.

Writer Says U.S. 'Biggest' Israeli Weapon*NC2303112893 Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 17
Mar 93 pp 4, 14*

["Through the Keyhole" column by Kamil Zuhayri]

[Excerpts] After meeting U.S. President Bill Clinton, Yitzhaq Rabin said that he can now say Israel has a friend in the White House. Thus, U.S.-Israeli relations move to a new stage in the Clinton-Rabin era. There was no love lost between former President George Bush and former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir. But this situation has now ended and the traditional intimate relationship between "the U.S. superpower and greater Israel" has returned to its state in the days of Harry Truman, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan. Even more importantly, President Clinton's asserted, at his joint news conference with Rabin in Washington, that the United States is committed to the maintenance of Israel's military superiority. [passage omitted]

Yitzhaq Rabin went to Washington to meet the new U.S. President and get reassurances on the old commitment to maintain Israel's "quantitative and qualitative" superiority over all the region's countries. He also went there to inquire about the new U.S. Administration's announcement that it will change its role from mediator to partner in the peace process. He would certainly have demanded a U.S. adherence to the letter of guarantees it sent to Israel before the Madrid conference. That letter, published by MA'ARIV a few days before the conference, included a U.S. commitment not to exert pressure during the negotiations.

The future of peace remains vague. The facts of the U.S.-Israeli dossier remain unchanged. I repeat my earlier statement: Israel's biggest weapon is the United States and its most dangerous weapons are inter-Arab disagreements.

We need a new policy and new concepts to deal with these weapons in the next few years.

Split in al-Jihad Seen; 90 'Extremists' Caught*NC2203120693 Cairo AL-AHRAM PRESS AGENCY in
Arabic 1025 GMT 22 Mar 93*

[Text] Cairo, 22 Mar [AL-AHRAM PRESS AGENCY]—The four Egyptian dailies AL-AHRAM, AL-AKHBAR, AL-JUMHURIYAH, and AL-WAED today highlight news of a new split in the terrorist al-Jihad Organization. The papers focus on the Egyptian security agencies' efforts to

track down the terrorists who took part in operations to strike at tourism and disrupt stability in Cairo and Upper Egypt.

Security men uncovered an extremist organization in al-Sharqiyah Governorate that includes doctors, lawyers, and students. Ninety extremists have been referred to the Higher State Security Prosecutor, who remanded 72 of them for 15 days pending investigations and postponed questioning the remaining 18 defendants until their detention orders issued by Interior Minister 'Abd-al- Halim Musa are finalized.

The interrogation conducted by the Higher State Security Prosecution Office has revealed that the extremist organization includes elements from the al-Jihad Organization. Members adopt extremist antiregime beliefs and use terrorist methods to achieve their goal—seizing power. Some defendants admitted that organization members go through four stages. In the first, the organization's beliefs are conveyed to extremists. The second begins when members are recruited. In the third stage, groups are formed. The last involves implementing radical changes in the regime.

The organization includes many juveniles, who confessed before prosecutors that the al-Jihad Organization is financed via Afghanistan and Sudan. Attorney General Counselor Muhammad Mabruk sent the items seized along with the defendants to the criminal laboratory for examination. He issued arrest warrants for the remaining organization members.

[In a related story, Cairo AL-AHRAM PRESS AGENCY in Arabic at 1030 GMT on 22 March adds the following: "Security authorities have foiled an attempt by three people to smuggle 50 kg of gold ingots through the al-Sallum crossing point [on the border with Libya]." Citing AL-WAFD, the agency adds: "The defendants have been referred to the State Security Intelligence Office to determine the source of finance and the goals of the operation," noting that defendants denied any link with the "terrorist groups attacking tourism."]

Mufti Denounces Terrorist Actions Against Tourism

NC1903170793 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1609 GMT
19 Mar 93

[Text] Aswan, 19 Mar (MENA)—Egypt's Mufti His Eminence Dr. Sayyid Tantawi has said that the fatwa that says tourism is banned is false and came to Egypt from its enemies.

In a lecture delivered today at Badr mosque in Aswan following Friday prayers, the mufti denounced the terrorists' actions in killing police officers and soldiers, blowing up cafes, etc. He said all segments of the Egyptian people must stand united to strike at anyone who wants to undermine Egypt's security or cover up terrorism. He confirmed that differences of opinion must not turn into evil.

Legal Expert Comments on Combating Islamic Terrorists

AU2203184393 Hamburg DER SPIEGEL in German
22 Mar 93 pp 172-173

[Interview with Muhammad Zayid al-'Ashmawi, legal expert and former president of the Egyptian State Security Court of Justice, who is "on the death list of Islamic extremists," by an unidentified correspondent; place and date not given: "Subversion at All Levels"]

[Text] [DER SPIEGEL] Special police units are searching for Islamic terrorists in hideouts from Cairo to Aswan. What has given rise to this bloody all-out operation?

[Al-'Ashmawi] A delay of the showdown would have led to even more victims of attacks and would have made it clear that the government is unable to cope with these criminal gangs.

[DER SPIEGEL] But the mostly young fanatics are only a small minority. How can they be a danger to a society of 57 million people?

[Al-'Ashmawi] The murderers who kill tourists and representatives of the state apparatus, which they have branded as godless, are not a dangerous army in terms of numbers. But the many thousands of sympathizers who are still prevented from being actively involved by a threshold of inhibition form an alarmingly large surrounding scene for the terrorists. This scene is becoming increasingly vast and uncontrollable.

[DER SPIEGEL] The self-declared warriors of God have so far not managed to commit any action to shake the foundations of the state.

[Al-'Ashmawi] Apart from the fact that three dead tourists have damaged our tourism industry, which is vitally important for our country, the radicals have made our state shake for a long time. The house of Egypt is threatened with collapse by insidious religious demagoguery and brutalization.

[DER SPIEGEL] What do you mean specifically?

[Al-'Ashmawi] For 22 years, the militant Islamic instigators have been permitted to do what they wanted in our country. Then President al-Sadat even promoted these zealots because he thought that he would be able to downplay the influence of the Marxists with their help. The aggressiveness of most of these young hotheads, which cannot be justified with the Koran, later encouraged the Muslim Brotherhood, which is experienced in subversion, in its efforts to turn Egypt into an intolerant Islamic theocracy through subversion at all levels.

[DER SPIEGEL] Who are the wire-pullers?

[Al-'Ashmawi] Foreign intelligence services that want to destabilize our country because their government considers a strong Egypt as a threat.

[DER SPIEGEL] Do you mean Iran?

[Al-'Ashmawi] Iran and others. The terrorists who throw the bombs do not know that. For them, the state and all fellow citizens who do not accept the cruelly distorted Islamic doctrine that they are supposed to believe are enemies of Allah.

[DER SPIEGEL] What can be done against the fundamentalist danger?

[Al-'Ashmawi] The advocates of the extremists should no longer be permitted to appear on radio and television and the radical Islamic education policy, which endangers the state, must be abruptly changed.

Writer Urges 'National Front' Against Terrorism NC2303083893

[Editorial Report] In a 2,000-word article on pages 3-4 of AL-MUSAWWAR on 19 March headlined: "It Is Not the Concern of the Regime or the National Democratic Party Alone," AL-MUSAWWAR Editor in Chief Makram Muhammad Ahmad examines terrorism, its origin and possible cures.

After asserting that terrorism is more complex than many people think, he traces it from the 1970's, when the terrorist trend "seized the opportunity to flourish under the wing of a state that antagonized every political trend in Egypt and questioned all the cultured cadres." He claims the state "foolishly encouraged that trend, hoping it would balance the leftist thinking that had seized the best of Egyptian students."

Today, Ahmad believes, the country is up against a "complex phenomenon that took years to hatch successive generations of proficient cadres" and up against "an organized underground activity backed by many foreign powers whose major concern is to keep Egypt in a vicious circle" and prevent it from "maintaining its right march along the road to reform and progress."

Enumerating factors in the growth of secret organizations, Ahmad sees "an absence of a panoramic view of how to confront the hazard, the ghastly political failure of democratic powers, rivalry among the national parties and their failure to set up a national front to confront the trend, and deficient and conflicting security policies."

He says Egypt developed a clear-cut security policy after late President Anwar al-Sadat was assassinated. This policy identified the major danger as a terrorist trend controlling the minds of youth, misleading them with false claims that link religion with violence. But, he states, this policy retreated under the new security policies adopted by "certain interior ministers who failed to realize the extent of the danger involved in the growth of these groups." He observes that Interior Minister 'Abd-al-Halim Musa inherited the difficult conditions caused by these policies.

Saying that he does not want to blow terrorism out of proportion because most Egyptians reject and condemn it and the state remains in control, he identifies some facts that he says should be considered as the country embarks on an all-out confrontation.

The first is that the existing terrorist organizations include "individuals and cadres weaned on a devious ideology that justifies crime, violence, murder, destruction of the national economy, and undermining the livelihood of many Egyptians." He suggests: "Those who talk about the need to reconcile with these trends make the wrong diagnosis and prescribe the wrong cure."

The second fact, he says, is that these organizations are run by "big schemers who know very well that the success of development efforts, the revival of the national economy, and the growth of investment and tourism will eventually pull the rug out from under the feet of the groups that benefited from the economic crisis to recruit frustrated and desperate young men."

The third of the writer's facts is that the battle is more complicated than some people may think, because "it combines foreign conspiracies with difficult domestic conditions." Elaborating on this point, Ahmad states: "Some parties hate to see Egyptian tourism succeed to the point where Egypt becomes a basic partner in the world tourism market." He goes on: "Some parties do not want to see Egypt getting so strong that it can become an active partner to Arab or regional security" and claims: "There are others who do not want Egypt's vision of peace to win or who hate to see conditions so stable in Egypt that it can dedicate its resources to a comprehensive development that promotes its capabilities and improves its people's conditions." Such people, he suggests, might find in these groups the instruments that they can mold to serve their objectives. Ahmad goes on: If the Iranian hand is the hand most clearly seen in this conspiracy, there are certainly other parties that do not want Egypt to get up and free itself from the terrorism that can paralyze its energies and confuse its future.

With his fourth fact, Ahmad concludes that an all-out security confrontation is urgently needed, but it is not enough. He suggests that an all-embracing "national front" is required to rescue Egypt from the claws of terrorism. He says it is the masses' duty to protect tourism, encourage producers and investors, and "to maintain cohesion to abort terrorist attempts to provoke the regime and force it to go back on the democratic choice."

He contends that the right approach to eliminating terrorism can only be identified by answering questions like: "Can Egypt go back to square one and ruin what generations have built with their sweat over long, hard years? Can there be a return to a more stern, more grim totalitarian regime that rules with an iron fist and lynches people without trial?"

Finally, he asserts that the issue does not concern the regime or the National Democratic Party alone, but concerns Egypt with all its political and economic powers. Setting up a national front to uproot terrorism is, he concludes, a pressing need.

Military Court Resumes Trial of 49 'Terrorists' NC2003164193 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1540 GMT 20 Mar 93

[Excerpt] Cairo, 20 Mar (MENA)—The Supreme Military Court held its third session today in the trial of 49

defendants, seven of whom are still at large, on charges of striking at tourism and the economy and disturbing public peace with the ultimate goal of overthrowing the regime.

The military prosecution came up with a surprise during the four-hour session, when prosecution representative Colonel Talal Najm-al-Din al-Batran presented the court with a videotape that incriminates the defendants and shows them confessing their terrorist scheme. The tape carries a full recording of the statement made by defendant Hisham 'Abd-al-Dahir before the first court hearing on 9 March. In the recording, 'Abd-al-Dahir announces that his group assassinated late President Anwar al-Sadat, [late People's Assembly Speaker] Dr. Rif'at al-Mahjub, and [writer] Faraj Fudah. He also said it was responsible for an attempt to assassinate former Interior Minister Zaki Badr and for attacks against tourism and the Egyptian national economy.

Court President Major General Muhammad Wajdi al-Lithi has requested that the tape be accepted as an exhibit. The tape will be used to confront the defendants.

One of the defendants read out a written statement before the session, although the rest of the defendants had tried to hide the statement. He said the Islamic movement will continue to express its rejection of the government's failure to respond to the group's demands to stop government physical liquidation campaigns and comply with the judiciary ruling to release the detainees. He added that the defendants should not be held responsible for any operations that take place while they are still behind bars. He also noted that [al-Jihad mufti] Dr. 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman is not only the leader of the Islamic groups in Egypt, but also the godfather and leader of many youths. [passage omitted]

Case Postponed; Media Reports Banned

NC2103160993 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1530 GMT
21 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 21 Mar (MENA)—In response to a request from the defense, the Supreme Military Court has banned media reports on case no. 6 entitled "Attacks on Tourism," in which 49 defendants, seven of whom are still at large, are being tried.

The court also has decided to postpone hearing the case until 29 March to complete the files on the case and enable the defense to read them.

Terrorist Arrest, Weapons Discovery in Qatar Denied

NC2203165293 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1605 GMT
22 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 22 Mar (MENA)—A responsible source has stated that reports published by certain newspapers, citing news agencies, on the arrest of terrorist Majdi al-Safti in Qatar and the discovery of a weapons and ammunition depot in al-Wadi al-Jadid are totally untrue.

The source added that the agencies that circulated this report apparently fell for false information by unreliable sources.

Morocco

Source Says Election May Be Postponed to 25 Jun

LD1803205193 Rabat MAP in English 1243 GMT
18 Mar 93

[Text] Rabat, Mar. 18 (MAP)—The coming legislative elections scheduled for next April 30 might be postponed to June 25, reported 'AL-BAYANE' daily quoting a reliable source. The daily of the Party for Progress and Socialism (PPS/opposition) said the delay would be justified by the short delays ahead of the initially set date and that do not leave enough time to meet some of the claims of the political parties, namely regarding the issuing of new voter's cards. The daily also reported that the PPS Central Committee will hold an extraordinary meeting Sunday to discuss preparations for the legislative elections.

King Receives PLO's Mahmud 'Abbas, Faysal al-Husayni

LD1903232293 Rabat Moroccan Kingdom Radio
Network in Arabic 2245 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Text] His Majesty King Hassan II, may God make him victorious, received this evening at the royal office Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas], member of the PLO Executive Committee and of the Fatah Central Committee, and Faysal Al-Husayni, who is chairman of the Palestinian steering committee on the Middle East peace negotiations. They were accompanied by Mr Abu-Marwan, the ambassador of the state of Palestine to Morocco. The meeting took place following their return to Morocco from Tunisia.

His Majesty held talks with the two Palestinian officials to complete the talks that His Majesty held last Tuesday with His Excellency Yasir 'Arafat, the president of the state of Palestine.

Algerians Said To Intercept Polisario Arms for FIS

LD2203132993 Rabat MAP in English 1231 GMT
22 Mar 93

[Text] Rabat, Mar. 22 (MAP)—A "Polisario" [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saquia El Hamra and Rio de Oro] element was arrested by the Algerian customs duties in Tindouf, carrying arms and munitions destined to the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS-banned), a Sahrawi who joined Morocco recently said. The person in question told the Algerian military security services that the arms were destined to Brahim Bouaam, FIS representative in Tindouf, the same source added. The Algerian security services were concerned over the news saying that the "Polisario" was supplying FIS with arms, sources last July [as received] said.

The "Polisario" leaders had denied involvement in such acts, but instructions were issued to prevent arm trafficking that can lead to problems with Algeria.

Sudan

TNA Speaker Welcomes Garang Cease-Fire Order

EA2103130093 Omdurman Sudan Broadcasting Service Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 20 Mar 93

[Text] Mr. Muhammad al-Amin Khalifah, speaker of the Transitional National Assembly and leader of the government's delegation to the peace negotiations, has welcomed the cease-fire decision declared by the John Garang group recently. He described the decision as a positive step to create a suitable climate for the second round of the Abuja, Nigeria negotiations. Mr. Khalifah affirmed that the cease-fire was an international moral commitment which clarified the armed forces' commitment to supply those affected with provisions.

His excellency added that Garang's decision is, from a political point of view, regarded as a positive pointer for the success of the efforts being exerted by the government to establish peace. He affirmed that the Summer Crossing [codename for military campaign against rebels] would remain a sword against the enemies of peace who hampered its course.

Nasir Faction on SPLA-Government Cease-Fire

AB2103221593 London BBC World Service in English 1705 GMT 21 Mar 93

[From the "Focus on Africa" program with Chris Green]

[Text] The recent cease-fire announcement from John Garang's faction of the SPLA [Sudanese People's Liberation Army] and the Sudanese Government means two of the civil war protagonists have agreed to stop fighting in the run-up to peace talks expected to happen in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, next month. But the situation in southern Sudan is more complicated than that because the SPLA is divided into several factions. The first to split away from John Garang was the so-called Nasir group led by Riak Machar, and yesterday I rang their representative in Sweden, Daniel Matthews, and asked him what the Nasir faction made of the two unilateral cease-fire offers.

[Begin recording] [Matthews] Well, first of all, John Garang is speaking for himself, and he is speaking for the small group around him. But still, the initiative by the government would be welcome by any person who is seeking a peaceful process in the Sudan.

[Green] Will your faction of the SPLA now call a cease-fire as well?

[Matthews] Well, I am now in Europe and I am sure our faction is studying the offer by the Sudan Government, and I am optimistic that they would not be contrary to that.

[Green] So you will hold the cease-fire with the government? What about with other factions of the SPLA? Will you refrain from any conflict with them?

[Matthews] Well, almost a year now we have had not any conflict with the other factions of the SPLA. Of late, it has been only Garang's faction—that was Torit faction—that has been in conflict with each other.

[Green] Has your faction been holding direct talks recently with the Khartoum Government?

[Matthews] Not recently.

[Green] Has there been a breakdown in communication between you?

[Matthews] No, there has not been any breakdown of communications. All efforts are being made to continue the peace process.

[Green] What would be your faction's conditions for getting reinvolved fully in peace talks?

[Matthews] Our condition is very clear—that we want the southern Sudanese people to determine their own destiny, which has been denied of them since the time before independence and after independence. And we have made this thing very clear, that we stand for the self-determination of southern Sudanese people, and we have already presented our position on an interim arrangement whereby we may coexist for a while within a Sudan so that in the end we are going to be given our right to decide in a plebiscite, or in a referendum, whether the southern Sudan should be an independent state of its own, or in a way define the continued relationship with the north.

[Green] Are you saying that if peace talks do not include provisions for such a referendum at some stage then you would keep fighting, regardless of any other peace process?

[Matthews] Yea, that is right.

[Green] Given the scale of humanitarian disaster now in southern Sudan, there is talk of a possibility now of foreign intervention. Would you support something like that?

[Matthews] Yes. I personally would support that kind of intervention, because our war has been hidden. I am happy that the world today is aware of what is happening in the southern Sudan. [end recording]

Foreign Minister Meets Egyptian Ambassador

EA2103123093 Omdurman Sudan Broadcasting Service Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 20 Mar 93

[Text] Dr. Husayn Sulayman Abu Salih, the foreign minister, met today Dr. Hasan Abd al-Haqq, Egypt's ambassador to Sudan. The meeting discussed the bilateral relations between the two countries in general and issues concerning the handover and takeover of al-Nilayn University, Khartoum branch, and the work of the joint committee that has been formed for this purpose.

Kuwait

* Baqir Discusses Organization To Prohibit Evil

93P50106A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 18 Mar 93 p 7

[Report by Hamad al-Jasir]

[Excerpts] Kuwait—"They are looking for mistakes and are striving to blow them out of proportion. They fought our plan even before they read its points or heard us give the details. It is a campaign against the Islamic trend in Assembly and every plan that this trend proposes, but they will not succeed, with the help of God, and the organization plan will go on."

In this way, Kuwaiti National Assembly Member Ahmad Baqir told AL-HAYAH about the great press controversy that has gone on in Kuwait for two weeks over the Islamic deputies' plan in the Assembly. Five of the Islamist deputies who belong to the "Popular Islamic Grouping" proposed the plan, requesting the establishment of a "public body to enjoin what is good and to prohibit what is sinful" to counter "the total inability of the official agencies, especially the Interior Ministry, to confront the behavioral deviations that are increasingly found in Kuwaiti society," as stated by the deputies who proposed the plan. [passage omitted]

Deputy Ahmad Baqir told AL-HAYAH that the proposed body "will not exercise any executive powers. It is not an alternative to government agencies. Its primary aim is to oversee behavioral deviations and unusual behavior entering our Muslim society, study them, and advance proposals on ways to counter them."

He said: "The body will be composed of officials in the ministries and organizations concerned with following up and regulating public morality and social values. This is not an apparatus that is controlled by the extremely religious individuals who chase people in the streets, as the hostile newspapers have alleged. We proposed that the body be headed by a chairman with the rank of minister and that an administrative council of six deputy undersecretaries in the Ministries of the Interior, Justice, Awqaf, Information, and Social Affairs help him. These are bodies that are concerned with moral issues in Kuwait. The administrative council will meet monthly to follow up reports of offices specializing in overseeing strange phenomena, studying them, and analyzing them. This council will be aided by experts specializing in human society and Islamic jurisprudence."

He went on to say: "The body will attempt, through various courses of action, to activate the role of the government agencies themselves and motivate them to counter phenomena that are contrary to our religion. The body will not exercise this role itself."

Ahmad Baqir considers the appearance of a public body to enjoin what is good and to prohibit what is evil "a great necessity to counter the laxity and laziness of government agencies in facing their obligations toward societal issues, and especially moral crimes." He explained that studies

that reliable specialist agencies in Kuwait, such as the Higher Planning Council, have carried out have confirmed the seriousness of moral deviations such as depravity and drugs in our society, and the proliferation of abnormal societal phenomena coming from abroad.

But when will the society see the light? Will the Assembly support [the plan]? And then what about the government's position?

Ahmad Baqir answered: "I do not expect that the plan will be submitted for discussion for several months. The National Assembly is dealing with an extremely crowded work schedule and is suffering from the weighty legacy of past years in which democracy was absent." He said: "It is not possible to predict the fate of the plan with accuracy, but the nature of the Islamic obligation for most of the deputies makes me optimistic about its success if it is put to a vote."

* Democratic Forum Elects New Secretary General

93P50106B London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 16 Mar 93 p 7

[Text] Kuwait—Former Kuwaiti Deputy Sami al-Munayyis was elected secretary general of the Democratic Forum, succeeding former Secretary General and current General Assembly Member 'Abdallah al-Nibari, while Ahmad al-Dayin, the assistant secretary general, remained in his post.

This happened Monday during the second session of the general assembly of the Democratic Forum. Three members nominated themselves for the post of secretary general—Sami al-Munayyis, 'Abdallah al-Nibari, and Dr. Khalid al-Wasmi. Al-Munayyis received 60 votes, while 'Abdallah al-Nibari received 47, and Dr. al-Wasmi received six.

A source close to the Forum said that another meeting of the general assembly would take place on Thursday to elect the Forum's high council, which is composed of 21 members, some of whom make up the seven-member executive bureau.

It might be mentioned that the Democratic Forum is an opposition democratic liberal group that appeared after the liberation of Kuwait. Its most prominent elements were formed from the rest of the Arab national movement, as exemplified by Deputy Ahmad al-Khatib and Jasim al-Qatami, a champion of human rights in the Arab world.

Qatar

Speaker Receives Message From Iran's Nateq-Nuri

LD2203150393 Tehran IRNA in English 1432 GMT
22 Mar 93

[Text] Abu Dhabi, March 22, IRNA—The Islamic Republic Ambassador to Qatar Baqer Safa'i today handed

over Iranian Majles Speaker 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri's message to Qatari Speaker of Parliament 'Ali Bin-Khalifa al-Hatmi.

The two officials exchanged views on current Muslim world developments and underlined the need for solidarity and cooperation among the Islamic countries to counter the plots of enemies of Islam and Muslims.

Meanwhile, in another meeting with Qatari Amir Court Minister 'Issa Bin-Ghanim al-Kawari, Safa'i discussed Irano-Qatar bilateral relations and some regional subjects of mutual interest.

Saudi Arabia

Crown Prince Warns Against Political Violence

LD2303085393 Riyadh SPA in English 2004 GMT
22 Mar 93

[Text] Riyadh, March 22, SPA—Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the deputy premier and commander of the National Guard, on Monday extended greetings to Saudi citizens and Arab and Muslim peoples on the occasion of 'Id al-Fitr.

In a televised address, Prince 'Abdallah pointed to the dangerous phenomenon of political violence and extremism in the Arab and Islamic nations. He said Arabs and Muslims are the victims of political recklessness and ignorance. Thanking Allah, he stressed that "all our positions with incidents and conflicts are preventive...a firm principle on which we would not bargain, with God's willing, and we do not accept to have anybody bargain with us on it. Nor do we accept to have anyone transgress on any of our inalienable rights."

"Your security and prosperity are based on your awareness, honour and sound views on this world and the suffering of peoples. You are the sons of those men who united this country with their great leader, the father of all, King 'Abd al-'Aziz, may Allah rest all their souls," he said. "Brothers, there are people who believe that our Gulf region is nothing more than an oil storage facility, but they forget that it is a dear land that embraced, before oil, the roots of the nation that carried the heavenly message to the nations of the earth. The Gulf is an essential part of the Arabian Peninsula which made Arabism and Islam historically bound together."

"Your Kingdom was and still is a factor of reconciliation between Arabs and Muslims. It has called for this and

preserved it, and was never a cause of rift in the unity of Arabs and Muslims. There is nothing more dangerous for the Arab and Islamic world today than a stupid policy that does not know that the whole world lives in an age where universal thinking and interests prevail."

He pointed to the Kingdom's happiness for the Afghan mujahideen's overcoming of their marginal differences and stressed that Serbian crimes in Bosnia, Israeli practices in the occupied territories and conflicts in Somalia still make the hearts of all Muslims bleed. Prince 'Abdallah confirmed that the three systems of ruling, shura and provinces are a wide entrance for citizens to take part in all issues that concern them and serve their public interests.

United Arab Emirates

Zayid Asks Religious Men To Counter 'Extremism'

JN2303091493 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0650 GMT
23 Mar 93

[Text] Abu Dhabi, 23 Mar (WAKH)—His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, president of the United Arab Emirates [UAE], has called on men of religion and scholars in the Arab and Islamic world to counter the phenomenon of religious extremism, which is rejected by Islam, and to enlighten youth to the principles of the true religion, which calls for tolerance and forgiveness and rejects the killing of a Muslim by a brother Muslim.

In an address to scholars and judges during a reception last night, Shaykh Zayid said that adopting a distorted version of religion causes serious alienation from the Islamic principles and the essence of the Book of God and the traditions of his honorable apostle, may God's peace and blessings be upon him.

In his address, which was reported by the Emirates News Agency, his highness added that it is the duty of scholars to explain to people the essence of Islam and its great message in a manner compatible with the tolerance of Islam, which calls for inviting all to the way of God through wisdom and beautiful preaching, so that people will respond to it and counter the terrorism and killing that is taking place in the name of religion.

His highness asked: "Is it in the interest of the homeland and its sons that their resources be squandered and that the wealth of the Muslims be devoted to financing terrorism and charlatany in the name of religion?"

His highness the UAE president said that the sons of the Islamic nation, which was previously ruled by foreign colonialist rulers, should praise and thank God because "it is a great blessing that our nation is now ruled by leaders from among its people, and that we possess for our people potentials and resources which we must protect against those who adopt corrupt intellectual trends."

Speaking about the killing of innocent people by extremists in Egypt and Algeria, His Highness Shaykh Zayid

Bin-Sultan asked: "Have not Egypt and Algeria always been Islamic? They and other states in the Islamic world have embraced Islam since the dawn of Islam, and they are working in accordance with the Book of God and the traditions of his prophet."

The UAE president added that men of religion and scholars should perform their mission by preaching the sound teachings of Islam and by guarding Islam and Muslims against terrorism and extremism.

U.S. Reportedly Wants Informal Sanctions Review
JN2203213293 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2100 GMT
 22 Mar 93

[Text] The United Nations, 22 Mar (INA)—Many sources informed the INA correspondent in New York today that the United States is no longer interested in calling the Security Council into a public session to review the anti-Iraq sanctions.

The sources added that the U.S. Administration had informed its European allies that it is no longer interested in such a session, and that it now wants the sanctions review to take place within the framework of informal and private consultations among the Council members.

A formal session of the Security Council was expected to review the sanctions next week.

Truce With U.S. Said in Effect Despite 'Negative Signs'

JN2303124493 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1050 GMT
 23 Mar 93

[Text] Baghdad, 23 Mar (INA)—The newspaper AL-JUMHURIYAH has said that Iraq still adheres to its truce with the U.S. Administration despite the signs shown by Washington, which encroach on Iraq's interests and sovereignty.

In an article by Ghazi al-Ayyash, the paper expresses its regret because the Clinton administration is following the Bush administration's example by fabricating media lies against Iraq whenever a date for discussing the lifting of sanctions in the Security Council is close.

AL-JUMHURIYAH points out that among the negative signs shown by Washington against Iraq was U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's statement, following his Middle East tour, that the Iraqi people's suffering under the embargo is a matter that only concerns them and that they are responsible for it.

Discussing the link between lifting the embargo and improving U.S.-Iraqi relations, on the one hand, and resolving the Palestine question according to the Israeli concept on the other, AL-JUMHURIYAH says: This link is a deception in the form of advice given to the new U.S. Administration by certain Arab parties harboring stands hostile to Iraq.

Recalling the Iraqi position on the Palestinian people's cause, the paper says: This stand is no longer a secret after having been announced by several Iraqi officials. It supports what is accepted by the PLO, in its capacity as the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative. AL-JUMHURIYAH draws attention to the secrets exposed as a result of the inspection teams' practices, and to the disclosure of parties which direct these teams in accordance with instructions hostile to Iraq.

AL-JUMHURIYAH focuses on the role of the disinformation networks run by U.S. and European public relations companies in distorting Iraq's image, thanks to Saudi and

Kuwaiti funds. The paper says: The false images and allegations made by these networks should not be the indicators that shape the new U.S. Administration's relationship with Iraq.

Stressing Iraq's important role and political weight in regional affairs, the paper says: No one can ignore this role. Other parties, including the United States, should not, in light of their hostile stands, drive Iraq into reviewing its stands on regional events. In this regard, the paper draws attention to the fact that the regional balance of power has been against most regional states as a result of Iran's armament policy and the Tehran rulers' ambitions in the Arabian Gulf.

New Euphrates Canal Said 'Depriving' Marshlands

NC2203180693 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1600 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] The Iraqi regime has completed the building of its new canal to change the course of the Euphrates River to irrigate areas near al-Najaf. This Iraqi step aims at depriving the southern population in the marshlands from their traditional environment.

It should be recalled that the canal, which is 135 km long, has been dug in less than six weeks.

Saddam Cables Fidel Castro on Reelection

JN2003160793 Baghdad INA in English 1510 GMT
 20 Mar 93

[Text] Baghdad, Mar 20, INA—President Saddam Husayn has sent a telegram of congratulations to Mr. Fidel Castro on his re-election as the president of Cuba.

In the telegram, President Husayn wished President Castro good health and happiness and the friendly Cuban people more progress and prosperity and the bilateral friendship and cooperation relations further development in service of interests of both peoples.

Ramadan Holds Talks With Bulgarian Official

JN2003160193 Baghdad INA in English 1515 GMT
 20 Mar 93

[Text] Baghdad, Mar 20, INA—Vice-President Taha Yaseen Ramadan received today Mr. Georgi Kuchev, president of the labour bloc and chairman of Trade Unions in Bulgaria.

During the meeting, Mr Ramadan said the joint interests and goals of the peoples remain the fundamental foundation of solidarity for freedom, progress and sovereignty, and victory will be in favour of the peoples who reject the dependency and dominance.

He added that the humanitarian principles and sublime objectives are stronger than all shows of aggression and methods of misleading and distortion, referring that the world public opinion is unveiling daily the wicked dimensions of the U.S.-led 30 states aggro against Iraq.

For his part, Mr. Kuchev lauded the reconstruction drive in Iraq despite the harsh circumstances of the comprehensive blockade, which demonstrates strength and bravery of the Iraqi people to surmount all difficulties and hardships.

Arab League Informed of Airspace Violations

16 Mar

JN2103124593 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 21 Mar 93

[Text] Iraq yesterday informed the Arab League of the continued violation of its airspace by U.S., British, and French planes taking off from bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

In a letter yesterday to the Arab League secretary general, Iraq's permanent representative explained that on Tuesday, 16 March, these planes, flying from their bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, carried out 39 hostile air sorties in Iraqi airspace. He affirmed that these new violations constitute a serious threat to Iraq's security, sovereignty, and national unity.

The Iraqi representative requested that this message, which he enclosed with a list detailing these violations, be circulated among the Arab member states to acquaint them with these regrettable facts.

17, 18 Mar

JN2203101993 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0755 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] Cairo, 22 Mar (INA)—Iraq has again protested the continued violation of its airspace by U.S., British, and French planes taking off from bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

This came in a letter to the Arab League secretary general by the Iraqi permanent representative to the Arab League.

The letter explains that these violations pose a serious threat to Iraq's security, sovereignty, and national unity.

The letter indicates that on 17 and 18 March the enemy planes continued to violate Iraqi airspace by carrying out 100 hostile air sorties flying from their bases in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Trade Minister on Private Sector, Rationing

JN2203123093 Baghdad AL-'IRAQ AL-IQTISADI in Arabic 13 Mar 93 p 3

[Interview with Iraqi Trade Minister Muhammad Mahdi Salih by Muhammad 'Abd Naji in Baghdad; date not given]

[Excerpts] [Naji] The public sector has always been the masses' stronghold. How did the Trade Ministry translate this fact during the years of the unjust blockade?

[Salih] This is a fact. The public and socialist sectors are a stronghold through which the requisites of steadfastness were made available. During the blockade, the Mother of

Battles, and afterward, the state continued to secure the basic needs of the country and citizens in terms of food, electricity, water, fuel, and public services in spite of the fact that the blockade was and is still tough. Never before in the history of the world has such a blockade taken place. Those who planned and implemented this blockade sought to disrupt all activity and cause famine in Iraq shortly after the start of the blockade. However, the fact that these affairs were run by the state and the socialist sector enabled this country to reorganize its domestic front according to its abilities and, consequently, secure the minimum requirements to maintain and perpetuate steadfastness. Another aspect is the construction whose program was carried out by the public sector with speed, accuracy, and expertise. Had we depended on the private sector in running the country during the blockade and the Mother of Battles and after the military aggression, the country would not have been able to organize its activities and provide its basic needs the way it did. In my opinion, the country would not have been reconstructed if there had not been a central administration, supervised by leader President Saddam Husayn, may God protect him, in charge of providing the basic living needs of the citizens and reconstruction. Competition among the various ministries to reconstruct the country was adopted by the leader president as a means to motivate workers and urge speed and accuracy in implementation. This enabled the country to rebuild itself. Had this happened in a capitalist country that is entirely dependent on the private sector, the country would not have managed to rebuild what was destroyed. [passage omitted]

[Naji] World press reports say some companies are ready and willing to deal with Iraq. How ready are they to do so once the embargo is lifted? Have any offers been made at this stage?

[Salih] Yes, the companies are willing and ready to sign trade contracts. Actually, several representatives of these companies arrived in Iraq and contracts were signed with them in the hope that they will be implemented when the embargo is partly lifted. They expressed their readiness to implement part of these contracts if the circumstances in their own countries enabled them to do so even before the embargo is partly lifted. The Italians, for example, made an offer. They signed a \$600 million contract, which will be financed from the frozen assets once the freezing decision is canceled.

[Naji] Some think that the private sector has failed to play its required role in the Mother of Battles and the embargo stage. What is your opinion?

[Salih] I do not think this is correct. The private sector played a national role in the Mother of Battles despite some negative aspects in its activities and behavior. The private trade and import sector brought in commodities the country was not allowed to have. This is a national role. It brought in goods and made them available in the market although the Security Council resolution prohibited them. It has thus supplied the market with other goods and helped satisfy the citizens' needs during the embargo.

However, due to the circumstances of the embargo, prices soared and the citizen could not put up with them. Therefore, the citizen views the private sector as negative. There is certainly some sort of monopoly. We do not say that all merchants are good. Some of them practiced monopoly and blackmail. They brought goods of poor quality and short expiry date and perhaps unfit for human consumption. These are negative aspects. But the bright and positive side is that they interacted with the required state of affairs and brought goods which could not be produced locally during the embargo. When all activity came to a standstill during the military aggression, when factories stopped production, and when electricity was cut off, the trade sector secured the flow of goods into the local market. [passage omitted]

[Naji] Can you tell us about the costs of the ration card system?

[Salih] I will tell you in figures how much the ration card costs the state:

- The state spends \$48 million per month to provide bread for citizens.
- The state spends \$10 million per month to provide sugar.
- We need to pump in 310,000 tonnes of food supplies, and use 10,000 trucks with a capacity of 30 tonnes each per month.
- We provide citizens through dealers with 6 million 50-kg sacks of food supplies.
- Food rations cost the state \$90 million per month.

[Naji] Some believe that the market is passing through a stage of recession partly because of the ban imposed on dealing with certain commodities. Are there ideas to reconsider the ban decision? Why do you not lift the ban on dealing with such commodities and be satisfied with banning their importation?

[Salih] In fact, I want to complete what I have to say about the ration card. Afterward, I can answer your question through this topic.

During the month of Ramadan, the state distributed lentils, beans, and chickens—which were added to the ration card on 6 March 1993. Lentils, distributed at $\frac{1}{4}$ kg per individual, cost 500 million dinars. Beans, also distributed at $\frac{1}{4}$ kg per individual, cost 126 million dinars. One chicken per family costs 4 million dinars.

Now we move to the other question. In fact, any anticipation of relaxation results in less demand and recession. This is accompanied by a desire to sell. This was one of the reasons that led to lowering prices. This was not due to a decline in the dollar price against the dinar. In fact, there are two other economic factors. First, in such cases,

merchants hasten to sell what they have in stock in anticipation of a further decline in prices, and to avoid making less profits from their merchandise if they keep waiting. Second, when uncertainty prevails the market, the citizen tends to stockpile commodities. This pushes prices even higher. However, under the current circumstances, the citizen has moved away from the market in anticipation of a further decline in prices. These two factors, in addition to the strength of the dinar, help bring prices down. Prices go down when there is less demand and greater supply by merchants seeking to sell more. This is what happened in mid-February 1993. There is another factor of stability, which is the strength of the political will of President Saddam Husayn, may God protect him, as well as of the country and the leadership. From the material angle, this is reflected on the country's steadfastness and stability, which have become so immune, contrary to enemy wagers. This strengthens the economy. As for the Iraqi dinar, the pace of its retreat is becoming slower. As for prices, if they do not remain stable, they increase in a relatively stable manner. There is confidence in the future of the country under a political management and leadership which preserves the country's resources in the interest of the country and citizens.

The essential point is that after its wager on undermining Iraq and its national will, the West is now trying to contact us through the companies which seek to deal with us. This is a sign of the steadfastness of our country and of its political leadership, and the enemies have become certain of this. The other additional factor is the ban imposed on importing certain commodities. As a clear result of this decision, merchants shifted to dealing with food and basic commodities. Furthermore, the Iraqi dinars and dollars, which were transferred by merchants in the past to import food, have been used to import other commodities. Now, the amount of dinars transferred, in accordance with Central Bank statistics, is far less than what was transferred in the past. Consequently, this reinforces the display of commodities, particularly food commodities. [passage omitted]

Alcoholic Drinks Banned From 0600-1800 Fridays

JN2103173893 Baghdad AL-IRAQ in Arabic
17 Mar 93 p 2

[Text] Baghdad—Out of respect for the spiritual and religious meaning of Fridays, Interior Minister Wathban Ibrahim al-Hasan has banned the serving of alcoholic drinks in all the Iraqi governorates from 0600 until 1800 on Fridays.

This is what Ibrahim al-Salih, the interior minister's press and information secretary, told AL-IRAQ. He added: This decision portrays the spiritual and religious meaning of Fridays in the lives of all the Muslims. The serving of alcoholic drinks, when prayers and religious rites are held and the faithful go to mosques, is not in keeping with the spirit of this holy day.

Knesset Rejects Motions of No-Confidence in Government

TA2203190393 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1830 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] The Knesset plenum tonight rejected the motions of no-confidence in the government submitted by the Likud, Tzomet, and the National Religious Party. Correspondent Tziyon Nanus reports that 50 Knesset members [MK's], including all SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] MK's who attended the proceedings, voted against the motions. The motions were supported by 41 MK's. The five MK's of HADASH [Democratic Front for Peace and Equality] and the Arab Democratic Party abstained.

Rabinovich Address Creates Stir Over Expulsion Policy

TA2303060393 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Israel's ambassador in Washington, Itamar Rabinovich, caused a minor sensation last night when he made what sounded like a hint that Israel might carry out another expulsion of Palestinians in order to fight the current wave of terrorism. He was speaking at a banquet of AIPAC [American Israel Public Affairs Committee], the pro-Israel lobby in Washington:

[Begin Rabinovich recording] The name of the sister of the late Sergeant Toledano, who was killed by zealots in December, was mentioned earlier, and it was in the aftermath of that terrible kidnapping and assassination that the Israeli Government resorted forcefully and took action. We may have to do the same again, while being committed to the greater goal of making peace and staying in a peace process. We will not lose sight of that. [end recording]

Our diplomatic correspondent Jack Katzenell comments that it is extremely unlikely that the ambassador really meant more expulsions; however, his choice of phrase sent reporters rushing to telephones.

UN Envoy on Arab Push To Convene Security Council

TA2303121693 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1005 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Report by Arye Golan in Washington]

[Text] It was Ambassador Nabil al-Arabi, the Egyptian ambassador to the United Nations, who called on the current Security Council president, the New Zealand ambassador, in the name of the Arab bloc to convene the Council to debate what he called Israel's responsibility for the deterioration in the territories. The Israeli delegation to the United Nations at present believes there is no chance of preventing the convening of the Council in the near future for another anti-Israeli show. We can only try to minimize the damage and the criticism, our UN Ambassador Gad Ya'aqobi said.

[Begin recording] [Ya'aqobi] I hope we will be able to foil the initiative, which will only heat up the atmosphere and will not contribute to the efforts to resume the peace talks. I hope that if the Council nevertheless convenes, it will make do with a presidential announcement. In the Council deliberations, we will of course describe the terrorist actions, the murders and knifings in the territories. I am not sure that the Council will be serving the aim for which it is being convened, even from an Arab point of view.

[Golan] Perhaps the contrary will happen. It might give the Arab states the opportunity to blow off steam by shouting at Israel a bit, and that might then bring them back to the peace talks on 20 April.

[Ya'aqobi] I do not believe that heating up the atmosphere can help in this instance. There will be a confrontation, a clash, a drama there, which I am not sure is what we need right now as the background for what we are interested in, which is the resumption of the peace talks in the second half of April. [end recording]

The United States will not prevent the convening of the Security Council this time. U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright will try to get the whole matter over with in a moderate announcement by the Council president which will call for a resumption of the peace talks. Ambassador Ya'aqobi met last night with the U.S. ambassador.

[Begin Ya'aqobi recording] The cooperation continues. There is an ongoing dialogue, which went on even today, but we still do not know how it will end. It does not depend solely on the Americans. [end recording]

UN sources believe that the Security Council could convene on 24 or 25 March, but we will apparently not be faced with a sharp and one-sided denunciation this time, as happened after the expulsion of the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] activists in December 1992.

Hamas Claims Killing Soldier in Jabalya Camp Operation

NC2203170393 Paris AFP in English 1630 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] Amman, March 22 (AFP)—The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) claimed responsibility here Monday for the weekend killing of an Israeli soldier in the occupied Gaza Strip.

Hamas said its Kata'ib 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam armed wing shot dead a soldier on Saturday in an ambush near the cemetery of Jabalya refugee camp. The guerrillas returned safely to base, it said.

Another fundamentalist group, Hizballah-Palestine, has also claimed the Jabalya attack. But the Israeli army said the spent shells left behind at the scene were marked Hamas.

"Another commando ... attacked a Zionist military patrol near the town of Jenin, killing one soldier and wounding others," Hamas said, without specifying when the second killing took place.

"Fighting is the only language that the usurping occupier understands, not that of concessions and negotiations in which our people have met with failure," Hamas said.

The movement opposes the Arab-Israeli peace talks and called last week for the Palestinian uprising in the territories to be stepped up.

Settlers, Rightist Parties Protest Security Situation

TA2003194393 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1900 GMT 20 Mar 93

[Excerpt] Hundreds of settlers and Moledet and Likud members are currently demonstrating outside Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's home. The demonstrators are hoisting placards protesting the deteriorating security situation and are calling on the prime minister to resign. A large police force is preventing the demonstrators from approaching Rabin's home.

Thousands of Taomet Party members today demonstrated in the southern part of the Golan Heights against the government's intention to return parts of the Golan to the Syrians. The demonstrators held a protest march and hoisted placards calling on Rabin not to give up parts of the Golan Heights or compromise Israel's security. [passage omitted]

Police Disperse Right-Wing Demonstration in Jerusalem

TA2203203393 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] Following a wild demonstration staged in central Jerusalem by right-wing members, mostly settlers and yeshiva students, police have started forcibly removing demonstrators from King George Street, using water hoses.

Our correspondents Gil Litman and Moshe Nussbaum report that six policemen were injured while dispersing the demonstrators; one had to be hospitalized. Two protesters were injured and dozens, including a soldier in uniform, were detained. The demonstrators set tires on fire, lay prostrate on the road to block traffic, and threw stones, bottles, and cans at policemen.

Traffic has now partially resumed in King George Street.

Arabs Injured, Knesset Members Attacked in Riots

TA2203124993 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1100 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Excerpts] In Jerusalem this morning, five pupils and the principal of the John F. Kennedy Apprenticeship Center in Talpiyyot were stabbed by an Arab assailant. One of the pupils is in moderate condition; the others were lightly injured. The assailant, a 22-year-old resident of Jabal al-Mukabar, was beaten by bystanders and later arrested by police. At this hour, Talpiyyot is tense but calm. Earlier,

an angry mob threw stones at Arab-owned cars and attacked Knesset members and journalists near the scene. [passage omitted]

Dozens of angry residents and workers in the nearby Talpiyyot industrial zone began throwing stones and other objects at Arab-owned cars on Pierre Koenig and nearby streets. Two Arabs were injured and eight of the rioters detained. They included five pupils and three adults. A border policeman was lightly injured by an empty bottle thrown at an Arab car. The windshield of another Arab-owned car was smashed. Deputy Education Minister Mikha Goldman came to the school to hear what happened and try to calm down the pupils. Other Knesset members also arrived, including Avraham Burg and Avi Yehezkel of Labor, who were rescued by police from an angry mob on their way out of the school. The Arab assailant was treated for light head wounds. Police say he was released about 18 months ago from jail, where he served a two-year sentence for throwing firebombs and setting a vehicle alight. [passage omitted]

An Arab man was beaten a short time ago by an angry mob on Hebron road. A Magen David Adom ambulance is now taking him to hospital. The attackers managed to get away before the police arrived. Police say they have sent additional forces to Talpiyyot to prevent any further outbreak of violence.

Home of Attacker Sealed

TA2303060593 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Security forces last night sealed the home of 22-year-old Nasir Hamdan Shakarit, who yesterday stabbed and wounded five students and the principal at the Kennedy High School in Jerusalem. The assailant comes from the village of Shaykh Sa'd, between Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

Near Bet Guvrin, two Israelis were lightly wounded when shots were fired at them by Arabs. The attackers escaped in a truck in the direction of Hebron. The two wounded Israelis work for the Nature Preservation Society and were taken to Ashqelon's Barzilai Hospital. The police set up roadblocks and started a search for the attackers.

2 Killed by Army in Riots at Gaza Strip Refugee Camp

TA2203202993 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] Two local residents were killed and 18 wounded in fierce disturbances in the al-Nusayrat refugee camp in the Gaza Strip this evening. Our correspondent Nisim Qeynan reports that according to Arab sources, IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers fired during pursuit of three masked men who had painted graffiti on walls. As a result of the commotion, residents streamed into the streets of the camp hurling stones at the soldiers, who fired at the rioters. A 10-year-old child, who sustained a critical head injury, was among the casualties. He died in the helicopter on the way to Soroka Hospital in Beersheba.

Soldiers Kill 2 Children in Gaza Strip

TA2203194893 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1900 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] Muhammad Jarbu', who was about 12, was killed in Rafah today. Arab sources said that the mentally unstable youth loitered near an Israeli Defense Force outpost in Rafah, wielding a plastic rifle. The soldiers seem to have feared the weapon was real. In Dayr al-Balah, in the Gaza Strip, a 10-year-old boy was critically injured by gunshots. He was evacuated to Soroka Hospital, in Beersheba, where he died of his wounds. The circumstances of his death are being investigated. A burst of gunfire was directed at a police vehicle in Khan Yunus this morning. No one was hurt, and no damage was caused.

Settler Interrogated After Killing Tied Arab

TA2303130593 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Excerpts] Yoram Shkolnik from Ma'ale Hever has been detained for interrogation by the Hebron police. He is suspected of having shot to death 19-year-old Jawwad Khalil Khushyah, who stabbed a Susya inhabitant and who, when apprehended, was found in possession of an object believed to be a hand grenade.

With regard to the circumstances of the event, it has been learned that a Susya inhabitant saw an Arab loitering near a cave outside the settlement fence this morning. He aroused suspicion because the preceding night, a 60-head herd of sheep had been stolen from Susya. Moshe Deutsch, the Susya secretariat chairman, and another man were summoned to look at the man. They decided to take him in for interrogation by the Army, and for that purpose, ordered him aboard their vehicle. [passage omitted]

In a statement describing the incident, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman's representative in the Central Command says that two settlers lunged on the stabber, tied his arms and legs, took him off the jeep, and reported their actions to their settlement. A medic who was summoned to the place treated the wounded settler. According to the IDF spokesman's statement, an inhabitant of Ma'ale Hever, who heard about the incident and happened to be near the scene, approached the Arab, shot him at short range, and killed him.

Hebron station policemen, who arrived on the scene at once, detained the shooter, who confessed his deed. The interrogation of the shooter, Ma'ale Hever settler Yoram Shkolnik, is in progress.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1230 GMT on 23 March adds that "according to the testimony of an ambulance driver, Shkolnik fired seven Uzi bullets into the victim's buttocks and back after the stabber was divested of his hand grenade."

[The report cites a statement issued today by the Judea and Samaria Settlers Council as saying that "it stands by everyone who fires when feeling his life endangered."]

Local Arabs Suspected of Belonging to Fatah Ring

TA2203183293 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1800 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] Two Israeli Arabs from the village of al-Tayyibah have been arrested on suspicion of belonging to a Fatah terrorist ring. Two Palestinians from the Gaza Strip were also taken into custody. According to the police, the suspects were trying to obtain arms to carry out attacks. At the time of their arrest, they were waiting for orders and funds from the Fatah headquarters in Amman.

Method of Operation of 'Hard-Core' Squads Noted

TA2203093593 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 22 Mar 93 p A1

[Report by military correspondent Eytan Rabin]

[Text] The undercover Shimshon and Duvdevan units will step up their struggle against the hard-core armed squads operating in the territories. A senior military source stated last night that there is no point in imposing a closure on the territories, which would prevent Arab laborers from leaving for work in Israel. At the same time, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] will use special and new methods to crack down on the squads of fugitives, mainly the 'Izz- al-Din al-Qassam squads, the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] military apparatus.

In discussions held at the Central and Southern Commands, it became apparent that all the senior officers believe that a success in the war against the hard-core terrorists is essential for reducing the level of violence. According to a West Bank military source, there are some 10 armed squads in that region, as well as armed terrorists who operate on their own. There are some seven additional squads in the Gaza Strip. The squads are associated with 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Fatah Hawks.

Explaining the reason why the exact number of squads is not known for certain, the source said that some of the squads habitually move from the West Bank to Gaza and back to avoid the defense forces. This pattern of operation is mainly typical of the Hamas squads.

The military source believes that "our struggle should focus primarily on these squads, while expanding intelligence activities in order to capture the fugitives and, if necessary, kill them." The senior military source added that it is easier to deal with the fugitives in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank.

Although the security authorities believe that yesterday's incidents in Khan Yunus—in which two residents were killed and 19 injured—do not justify imposing a general closure on the territories, they may decide to impose local curfews, if the situation calls for them.

Navy's Saar 5 Class Missile Boat Launched in U.S.

TA2003054593 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 20 Mar 93

[Text] The first of the Israel Navy's new Saar 5 Class missile boats has been launched at a shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi. Efrat Rabinovich, wife of Israel's ambassador in Washington, broke the traditional bottle of champagne on the bow of the ship as a crowd of some 300 people watched and applauded.

Ambassador Rabinovich said that the new missile boat, named ELAT, cemented the relationship between Israel and the United States. He also said that the decision to build the Saar 5 corvettes had elevated the strategic dialogue and partnership between the two countries. The ambassador, who was standing in for Prime Minister Rabin, apologized for the prime minister's absence, but said that his visit had accomplished its mission of strengthening ties with the United States.

Deputy Foreign Minister Meets IRC Representative

TA2303070993 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0600 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] The president of the International Red Cross [IRC] will come to Israel in approximately two months to discuss the deportee affair. Deputy Foreign Minister Yosi Beilin discussed this issue with Reto Meister, the IRC representative in Israel, who complained that Israel is violating human rights in the territories. Deputy Minister Beilin replied that the human rights issue is important to the Israeli Government.

Satellite Communication Accord Signed With ROK

TA2103144393 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 21 Mar 93 p B2

[Report by Tzvi Zrahya]

[Text] An Israeli-South Korean direct communication agreement was signed last week between Bezeq and Dacom, the South Korean communications company. Under the agreement, a direct satellite channel will operate between Gal'on, Bezeq's satellite communication station, and South Korea, by the means of a communication satellite over the Indian Ocean.

In its initial stage, the direct link will consist of 20 communication channels for speech, picture, and computer data services. The agreement will enable Bezeq to offer its Israeli customers direct international digital data lines which will improve the services and allow greater volume of communication.

The agreement was signed by Director General Yitzhaq Kaul on behalf of Bezeq.

Meretz Backs Talks With Palestinians on Gaza Withdrawal

TA2303070893 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0600 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] The Meretz faction approves of an arrangement for withdrawing from the Gaza Strip in the framework of the peace process without an interim arrangement. The faction embraced a document formulated by Minister Rubinstein, which calls for withdrawing from the Gaza Strip and transferring control to the Palestinians, while safeguarding Israel's security needs. Meretz emphasizes that it is not calling for unilateral withdrawal, but rather for negotiating with the Palestinians the transfer of rule in the Gaza Strip.

Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that most Meretz faction members support the possibility of the PLO assuming control of the Gaza Strip. Meretz demands, however, that any Palestinian element that takes over in the Gaza Strip will undertake to prevent the area from becoming a launching pad for terrorist attacks against Israel. Meretz proposes that Israel ask the United Nations, the EC, the United States, and other countries to support this arrangement and invest funds in developing the economic infrastructure in the Gaza Strip.

Labor Seeks Agudat Yisra'el Support for Coalition

TA2303122793 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 23 Mar 93 p A5

[Report by Shahar Ilan]

[Excerpt] The Labor party yesterday began holding political contacts with officials from Agudat Yisra'el. Labor put Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres in charge of the contacts. It was agreed that the negotiations will enter more practical stages next week, after the elections for the presidency. The Labor party hopes to sign an agreement by which Agudat Yisra'el will support the coalition without actually joining it as a full-fledged member.

In a meeting two days ago with Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin, Interior Minister Arye Der'i spared no efforts to bring Agudat Yisra'el into the coalition in a bid to ease the pressure on his own party. After the meeting, Mr. Rabin asked Foreign Minister Peres, who is considered to have better contacts with the ultra-Orthodox community, to handle the matter.

Ultra-Orthodox sources yesterday claimed that the Gur Rebbe, who is the leader of Agudat Yisra'el, is prepared to agree that while the party will not join the coalition while Shulamit Aloni holds the education portfolio, it will nevertheless pledge to support the government in important votes. In return, Agudat Yisra'el will demand the abrogation of the Human Rights Bill and, of course, additional funds. The security situation will be used as another argument to justify the agreement. [passage omitted]

Citizens Rights Movement Elects New Chairman

TA2203100693 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew
22 Mar 93 p A2

[Report by party affairs correspondent Ilan Shehori]

[Text] In a secret vote last night, the CRM [Citizens Rights Movement, one of the three parties composing Meretz] Council elected former Knesset Member Mordekhay Virshubsky CRM chairman. Virshubsky received 46 percent of the vote. His main rival was Zehava Gal'on, who headed

the opposition to the movement's leadership on the issue of the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] deportees and who received 40 percent of the vote.

Last year Virshubsky failed to get reelected as a CRM candidate for the Knesset, and he recently said he is willing to devote his time to public activity on behalf of Meretz.

Virshubsky will be replacing Beni Temkin, who chaired the CRM Council for the past few years. Senior Meretz sources last night expressed their great satisfaction with Virshubsky's election as the movement's new chairman.

Al-Hariri Views Domestic Affairs

NC2203200093 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1820
GMT 21 Mar 93

[Audio recording of a television interview with Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri by Camille Khuri, political analyst of the Beirut newspaper AL-NAHAR; Salah Salam, chief editor of the Beirut newspaper AL-LIWA'; and Walid Shuqayr, managing editor of London-based AL-HAYAH's Beirut bureau, in Beirut; date not given—recorded; interview broadcast on Lebanese television 21 March; individual questioners not identified]

[Excerpts] [Correspondent] Prime Minister, welcome. We are now at the beginning of spring. We would like to remind you of what you said on Independence Day. Let's listen to a recording: [Begin al-Hariri recording] On this national day, we pledge not to stop working until the state stands on firm ground and a new spring begins that will lay the foundations for a modern state and a development and construction process to begin in the next few years. [end recording] Prime Minister, most people see the approach of spring as hope for a better life and future. But there is also a group of people who consistently cast doubts on this. What do you say on this first day of spring?

[Al-Hariri] The government is about four months old. We have been looking over files since we assumed office. We put several things before us. First, we decided not to perform mere patchwork, because this will be useless. We have been doing patchwork for several years. There are thorny issues. Governments have always sought to put them aside, because they involve problems. Of course, it is difficult to open all these files at once and to try to solve them. It is not right to try to solve the problems of electricity, water, telephones, and the airport at once and to keep the people waiting until they are solved. We devised several rehabilitation programs to be carried out quickly, especially on issues that are closely connected with people's daily lives, such as electricity and telephones. [passage omitted]

Some things are moving faster than we expected and some a little slower. Some things have faced obstacles, but in general it's moving. [passage omitted]

I can make mistakes. I can try and not succeed. But I will not say something and not do it.

[Correspondent] There is, Prime Minister, a campaign of doubts of which you may know. Perhaps I could show you something? Yesterday I saw a cartoon on this in AL-NAHAR; it said that what you talked about can't be done. How do you explain this campaign of doubts?

[Al-Hariri] I do not see a campaign of doubts. I see the people, and this is natural in a democratic country, wanting things to move quickly. The people were not convinced about the war, which is why, when there was a lull after the shelling and killing, you saw the Lebanese citizen rush to repair his home and shop. He did this because he did not believe in the war and therefore not in its continuation. When the war ended, the Lebanese said:

Get me back where I was before the war. Regrettably, it is impossible to take the people back.

[Correspondent] Prime Minister, let us open the files on the high cost of living and services. [passage omitted] The citizen is interested in what is going to be done now. We talk about long-term plans, but we must first finish with the streets that need patching up, with the sewage—the things that are urgent. [passage omitted]

[Al-Hariri] You are right. What the citizen says is more than accurate. This is why we have submitted a plan on raising the standard of services in the suburbs. The Chamber of Deputies studied the plan and made additions, including the beltway and highways. The plan for raising the standard of services in the suburbs is designed to end problems of this kind. We know of these problems. We realize their importance. We know we should start with these. So money is required. We know this. We submitted the plan to the Chamber of Deputies some time ago and committees are considering it. We are awaiting approval to start the implementation. [passage omitted] The signs are encouraging. What I understood is that the plan will be considered in the Chamber of Deputies' first session after the holiday.

[Correspondent] Can we understand, Prime Minister, that the rehabilitation of the Southern Suburbs is linked with the approval of the master plan to develop the suburbs? Or can we separate them?

[Al-Hariri] Listen, the issue of the Southern Suburbs is a big one. This is one of the major thorny issues that has not been dealt with. The problems accumulated until now. There are Lebanese citizens in the Southern Suburbs who live in unsatisfactory circumstances, which we as a government do not accept. Had these people been able to live better, they would. Over the years the state has done nothing for them. Complaints as to why they live like this and why they live on property belonging to others or to the state are partially valid, but, generally, no one volunteered to live in the Suburbs. They were forced to, by their living circumstances, Israeli shelling, displacement, the war, or difficult social circumstances. I saw this myself. The state does not consider this an imposition. We are concerned about the situation, therefore the government must fulfill its duties to the Lebanese who live in the suburbs of Beirut, not only in the Southern Suburbs. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] [passage omitted] Prime Minister, the people complain that prices have not dropped, although the dollar exchange rate fell after the government assumed office.

[Al-Hariri] It is not true to say prices have not fallen. What is correct is that the people's income is low. Whatever someone does, the salary will not be enough. This is the main problem.

[Correspondent] What is the solution, Prime Minister?

[Al-Hariri] The solution is for the wheel of the economy to start moving. There is no other solution. The people's income must rise and the situation must be monitored and

ways must be found to reduce prices as much as possible. The currency rate must be kept stable. There are no inventions.

[Correspondent] What measures has the government taken to monitor price hikes? Is there any price-monitoring authority....

[Al-Hariri; interrupting] The price-monitoring apparatus is doing its job, but don't forget that we are in a country with a free-market economy. Thus, the margin within which the government can impose sanctions on traders is very small. Many countries that have tried to move in that direction have ended up facing more adverse consequences than price hikes. The best approach to reducing prices is competition and adopting certain measures that can increase the inflow of goods into the country.

[Correspondent] Have you thought about a national bureau for imports?

[Al-Hariri] Yes. The subject is still under discussion.

[Correspondent] Two opinions have surfaced on the matter.

[Al-Hariri] Well, naturally, this is a subject on which we cannot afford to have two opinions. There are fears that this matter may expand and we may reach the point where the state would import everything. This would involve grave risks. Personally, I believe we have to set up this bureau, and I believe we will. If this does happen, the state would not prevent people from importing....

[Correspondent; interrupting] Encourage imports.

[Al-Hariri] Yes.

[Correspondent] What about combating price hikes by supporting and encouraging the activity of cooperatives?

[Al-Hariri] Yes. We have met with cooperative representatives several times. They emerged from the meeting saying they would reduce prices, and they did. In the last cabinet meeting, the minister of economy passed around documents showing that prices, especially those of basic food commodities, did decrease. Don't forget that we are in the month of Ramadan, during which consumption doubles and prices go up everywhere in the Islamic world.

[Correspondent] Statistics by the parliamentary's Economic Committee on the reduction in prices are different than those submitted by the economy minister.

[Al-Hariri] I believe the minister is giving correct information, for which he is responsible. He lists the names of the shops and the prices of the commodities. Look, the basic problem is low income. This is the main problem and this is the cause of the current complaints. The solution is to set the wheel of the national economy in motion.

[Correspondent] And raise salaries?

[Al-Hariri] Everything would be possible then. We are in the process of adopting a number of measures to set the economy's wheel in motion. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] We want to know some dates. When will the electricity and telephone service improve?

[Al-Hariri] Let me tell you about the program and I will give you the dates. This issue was mentioned by the minister and on several other occasions. There are a number of programs for the electricity sector. The first involves repairs of malfunctions, which is already under way. There are repairmen handling malfunctions wherever they are. Second, specifications have been spelled out and bidders invited to make their offers, at the end of this month, to service all the existing equipment, repair the network, and add a new network. This will be the first program of its kind in Lebanon.

[Correspondent] How long will it take to do this?

[Al-Hariri] Between 18 and 24 months. The third issue involves inviting companies to bid to install 300 megawatts of turbo-gas. I have become well-informed about this subject from talking so much about it, although I am not an expert on electricity. The megawatt plan will be ready within a year and another 150 megawatts will be added to them once they are combined.

[Correspondent] So, after one year....

[Al-Hariri; interrupting] In a year we will have 300 megawatts; in one more year we will have 450 megawatts. Thus, the 1,250 megawatts we have will have been serviced. Some 1,000 megawatts will be generated from machines several years old, but they will have been overhauled. We will also have 300 megawatts from brand new machines, which will be in operation in approximately one year. Another 150 megawatts will be added to them, making the total 450 megawatts. Meanwhile, we are studying the installation of a steam-operated power plant to produce 450 megawatts. This type is of better quality, but it will take some time to install, between 36 and 42 months. This could be part of the Italian loan, which was discussed before, if the Italian offer turns out to be more favorable than others. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] What about the telephones?

[Al-Hariri] We have 450,000 telephone lines in Lebanon, 220,000 of which are mechanized. [passage omitted] These lines are underground and they malfunction easily. When you talk to someone, he hears you, but you don't hear him. Sometimes your telephone works and sometimes it doesn't. They cost a lot to repair. They work one month and not another. The government has decided to replace them, to get rid of them, something that should have been done long ago. Had previous officials done so, they would have relieved us and the people. [passage omitted] We have invited tenders—something I want to talk about for a while to show the kind of results that can be achieved when people are serious. To buy a telephone line on the market costs approximately \$240. The cost of 220,000 lines will be around \$47-\$48 million. We have invited the world's most important firms to make their bids. The price was between \$33-\$48 million. The minister met them before they submitted their bids and asked them to offer the best prices, because the government would accept the least expensive

offer. He told them there will be no commission or anything of the sort. Some people believed it and others didn't. Then something strange happened. For the first time in my life, I saw the cost of a line fall to \$100.

[Correspondent] And the standard of technology is high?

[Al-Hariri] The highest. It came from the world's best firms.

[Correspondent] So what will happen?

[Al-Hariri] Next week we will sign up for 280,000—not 220,000—lines at a price between \$25 and \$28 million. We could even go up to 300,000 lines, costing from \$90-\$100 each. They will be installed within six months from the date the contract is signed. The first line to become operational will start up three months from the contract date. So they will be operational in six months. They need three months to transport them and get organized and another three months to install them. The most important thing is that the tenders show Lebanon to be a serious country and that there is no fooling around in it. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] So, can we say that telephones will improve after six months?

[Al-Hariri] After six months, all old telephone exchanges will have been modified. Work to modify the telephone networks is already under way. The telephone problem in Lebanon involves the central exchanges, the network among these exchanges, and the network between central exchanges and homes. The latter is the most complicated. After 21 days, we will submit a tender to repair all networks and install 500,000 new phone lines [brief break in transmission] million lines. They will take 24 months to install. This will take Lebanon to the doors of the 21st century. Every citizen will receive a telephone in a dignified manner; he will not have to beg for this or that. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] How can you reconcile the fact that you are a leading businessman and a responsible statesman?

[Al-Hariri] This is not true. This is the talk of someone without logic who argues with you and says you are slandering and abusing them; it is tasteless talk.

[Correspondent] They also say, for example, that you are Islamizing the country and [words indistinct].

[Al-Hariri] This is the argument of those who lack in logic and proof. This is really shameful. Lebanon is a country that... [changes thought] I believe in what I am about to say, which I have said before and which I experienced before and after the Israeli invasion and since I have taken up serving the public: All those who work with me belong to various sects of Islam and Christianity. I have never viewed a man according to his religion. I have always looked at him according to his ability. Therefore, I should be the last to be accused of this charge.

[Reporter] I have a question about this. Some people...

[Al-Hariri, interrupting to continue previous argument] This accusation lacks objectivity. What do they mean by saying I am Islamizing the country? I believe more than

anyone else that this country must not be ruled by an individual, sect, group, or party. This country survives only through reconciliation. Any attempt to the contrary will take Lebanon into a tunnel from which it will not emerge. There were attempts in the past; I experienced them and their problems; I lived with the people who thought this way. I know how they ended up; I was one of those who advised them that the country could not be ruled that way. We did not die, but we know who did die. [laughter]

[Correspondent] I would like to discuss the issue from a different angle, Mr. Prime Minister. It is natural for people to think that you mix the businessman and the prime minister. Some oppositionists are talking about this. They say that things are being run with a board-of-directors mentality.

[Al-Hariri] What things?

[Correspondent] The projects, and even political affairs.

[Al-Hariri] This is not accurate. It is true that certain things are being managed like a business, for example the question of telephones, in which we are negotiating to get the cheapest price and the best quality. We do not deny this; on the contrary, we are proud of it. Regarding politics, it is being managed politically. It is the people who judge whether I am handling political affairs as a businessman or as a politician. Did we handle the question of Palestinian deportees with a business mentality?

[Correspondent] There is another aspect, Mr. Prime Minister. Some note that you, from your political position, are buying media establishments. There are now a number of media establishments that enjoy your support and of which you own most of the shares. The question of the media is being debated in the country, and there are some illegitimate establishments competing with Lebanon's Television.

[Al-Hariri] If you are talking about al-Mustaqbal Television, it was established before I became a prime minister. It will be the first to respect any law enforced by the state. The government will make legislation, but, as I said before, it will not do anything about the media without an understanding with the media. Things should not be viewed as an attempt to curb the media's freedom. We have two challenges regarding the media: Maintaining the freedom of expression and the press on one hand and respecting the law on the other. Some audio and visual establishments are operating without authorization. The government is supposed to solve this problem. But the subject is sensitive, and it should not be misunderstood. Some governments tried to address this problem in the past, but things were misunderstood. I am leaving this for some time until the media realize that the reorganization of the media, at the end of the day, serves them and the country. It is not the freedom of the press or expression that is targeted. On the contrary, we want the media to give the best they can, and everything they can.

[Correspondent] With your permission, let us now open the reconstruction file, the economic development plan, and the project to develop Beirut's commercial center.

Some people do not believe the plan for the reconstruction of Beirut's commercial center should be carried out by a single engineering company.

[Al-Hariri] Are you talking about the reconstruction of Lebanon or the reconstruction of the commercial center?

[Correspondent] The commercial center. Others (?are asking) for some amendments to the company's system. Is an amendment acceptable in principle?

[Al-Hariri] Your question is twofold: First, the charts for the commercial center's buildings should not be drawn by a single engineering company. This is 100 percent true, and I agree with it. I believe this should be avoided if we are to avoid a city whose buildings look the same. I do not think we are really doing this. There is a general map showing offices, hotels, houses, etc. The designs for these buildings will be offered by Lebanese and non-Lebanese architects, and we will choose the best. Dozens of local and international architects and engineering offices, therefore, will propose designs and sketches for the commercial center. You cannot have 50 engineering offices work on the general plan. You choose one office and discuss its plans; this is what has happened.

As regards amendments to the system, the system was (?issued by decree). If anything basic needs to be amended, we will amend it. We are eager for public interest. We are not inflexible. We care about the public interest. If anything is needed for the public interest, we will do it. No one has proposed anything in this regard. No one, for example, proposed that article so and so be amended in any way. Everything I heard boils down to one thing: Stop this project. I do not believe this would be in the interest of the country. We wish to hear any idea for improvement.

[Correspondent] Why are they asking for the project to end? Do they have any alternatives?

[Al-Hariri] I am familiar with almost everything written and all criticism against the plan to reconstruct the commercial sector. One would conclude that some people, undoubtedly, have good intentions and have certain ideas. I believe that most of the good ideas have been considered. However, some people are opposed to the reconstruction of Beirut for political reasons. They do not want to see in Beirut....

[Correspondent, interrupting] (?Better facilities?)

[Al-Hariri, laughing] No. There are political reasons, in fact, not related to the plan. I support every good idea that improves on the subject and oppose anything that ultimately would preclude the reconstruction of Beirut. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] When the plan was published, different comments were made about it. Some people thought it was bigger than Lebanon. They said it could bankrupt the Lebanese. [passage omitted] What do you say about this?

[Al-Hariri] No one disagrees that a plan should be devised for the country; otherwise, we would be like a ship sailing without a compass, not knowing where we are heading or where we will end up. It is the current situation that

bankrupts the country. It is not the plan. [passage omitted] I say the people determine Lebanon's role. If there is no national will, there is no homeland. There is no state without statesmen. We want to build a state and have a homeland. For this we need a national will. The national will is not just words; it must be represented in plans. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Does the plan visualize Lebanon's future economic role in the area?

[Al-Hariri] Of course. This plan will put Lebanon at the forefront of regional countries that can stand on their own feet. If not, we will be at the rear.

[Correspondent] What is Lebanon's economic role in the area? Will it be based on tourism or industry? Everyone says it can't regain its past role.

[Al-Hariri] We don't want it to; we want it to improve. I am one of those people who were not satisfied with Lebanon's role in the past. This is why I had to leave the country 25 years ago. Thank God, I was successful. But not everyone who emigrated was. Lebanon is supposed to have tourism, industry, and agriculture; it is supposed to have youths who work and produce. It is supposed to have education, universities, vocational schools, everything. Lebanon cannot depend on one thing. You cannot say Lebanon is an agricultural, industrial, or tourist country. It is something of all these things. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Prime Minister, the economic development plan, like all others, involves some problems. The problem lies in finance. Will the cash come from domestic or foreign sources and will it take the form of aid or loans, grants or facilities? The discussion begins, but we do not know how it ends. Plans remain up in the air and there is a feeling that they cannot be implemented without aid. Practically speaking, will this plan [words indistinct]?

[Al-Hariri] First, this plan is not a plan for the years beyond the year 2000. It is a plan to take us from today until 2002. We submit the plan for debate. It is not the government's plan alone or the Chamber of Deputies' alone; it is the Lebanese people's plan. We informed the Lebanese people that this is our thinking on developing Lebanon and raising it to the level of advanced states, ready to enter the 21st century. The entire Lebanese people should shoulder the responsibility for this plan. [passage omitted]

The plan requires financing. Do we expect to receive aid to the tune of \$13-\$14 billion? Did anyone discuss such figures? We might get 10 or 15 percent of this sum. I believe aid is forthcoming. I have no doubt about this.

[Correspondent] How much aid do you expect, Prime Minister?

[Al-Hariri] Somewhere in the region of the figures being mentioned—between 1.5 and 2 billion. But what is Lebanon's or the Lebanese leadership's role in rebuilding Lebanon? Should we wait for the aid? I am against this. I think there is a Lebanese will that should plan and say what it wants then we should ask and continue to ask our friends

to assist us. I think that if we start, they will assist us. I am sure of that. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Mr. Prime Minister, does Lebanon have the ability to absorb potential loans in terms of supervising the implementation of projects, pricing, and our administrative and political situation? Maybe the situation was negative in past experiences.

[Al-Hariri] I said a short time ago that I am not concerned about agreeing on a plan. I believe that we should be greatly interested in the party who should implement the plan. [passage omitted] The start should be undertaken by upper echelons. The responsible people should be completely trustworthy without a shred of doubt, because you are talking about tens of millions of dollars and this is no laughing matter, as it involves the nation's future. Here lies the problem. With this billion-dollar plan you can rectify the whole country or half of the country. It depends on whether or not there are honest officials and we have witnessed this in the past.

The Lebanese people should be wary and alert about who will be responsible for spending these funds after such funds have been endorsed. This is very fundamental issue.

[Correspondent] Will there be a body to follow up on this?

[Al-Hariri] Undoubtedly so. There have been many countries before us that developed themselves by depending on international institutions and companies. But the most important thing is for the political leadership to be good. The political leadership has to be good, honest, and trusted by the people. It should also be serious. I do not want to praise the government, but it has now become clear that the world has begun to open its arms out to us. Yesterday, Minister [of State] Sinyurah was in Paris and we solved a big problem with the French, which has been pending for a long time. As a result of this solution, we got a grant. We will be getting another grant for the 1993 budget. The sums announced so far are not accurate. There is a grant of 30 million [currency not specified] and there is another for no less than 60 million for 1993. There is a saving on interest of about 21 million. There will also be a decrease in debt of 67 million. Therefore, the total sum is about 160 or 170 million francs. The most important aspect of this is that we have closed a file that has been pending for a very long time. The other important aspect is that the private and public sectors in Lebanon are now capable of buying things from France while being covered by French guarantees. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] A few days ago, we noticed that there is great activity in the airport and much building going on, which had stopped for a very long time. What is happening at the airport?

[Al-Hariri] At the beginning of our interview, I said there are many sticky subjects and files that no one wants to approach. This government believes that there is no solution to these files other than coping with them. One of these is the airport. The ideas and general designs for the airport started in the sixties. The first plans were laid down in the early seventies. In 1978, they were reviewed and a

contract was signed. In 1981 another contract was signed. From 1981 to 1993 some work was done, but the problems became complicated. [passage omitted]

If things proceed well, we hope that within three years, we will have an airport finished in 1996 or 1997 with a year 2000 design and a capacity for 6 million passengers. It would have a hotel, restaurants, duty-free shop, cafeteria, waiting lounge, parking lot, and airplane parking area. It would be a modern airport that is financially self-sufficient.

[Correspondent] In the same area it is in now?

[Al-Hariri] Yes, in the same area. We can have a runway in the sea [as heard] and renovate the eastern runway. This will allow us to welcome people in Lebanon. This is part of the national will; that is, this airport is ours, so therefore we will have regained our status and position. If we do not do so [words indistinct]. Our status in the region hangs on our ability to welcome 1 million people a year. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] The tax collectors have been threatened. There are many complaints about them.

[Correspondent] One of these complaints is that your government should continue to [words indistinct].

[Al-Hariri] On the subject of taxes you have brought up, actually, there is something the people do not seem to understand clearly, although it has been announced. There are laws. The government cannot exempt people from taxes. Some measures were taken by the previous administration. Accounts were made and sent to the people. In violation of the applicable laws, we were forced to freeze collection of taxes because the people are truly suffering. We are preparing a draft law now to be referred to the Chamber of Deputies after it is studied in depth and approved by the Council of Ministers. The drafting committee has almost finalized it and it will be approved after discussion in the Council of Ministers and sent to the Chamber of Deputies. It talks about this subject and demands exemption for the previous period for institutions ...

[Correspondent, interrupting] For which years?

[Al-Hariri] I do not wish to discuss something that has not yet been approved by the Council of Ministers. But there is a trend to exempt some people on the one hand, to decrease taxes for some employees, and encourage companies to invest and decrease the taxes owed so that they can raise the salaries of their employees. Since independence in Lebanon, as you very well know, taxes have never constituted an essential part of the state's revenue—that is the taxes collected from companies. Of course, the poor person who pays his income tax in full is the employee. The plan also entails decreasing his tax, which in effect increases his income. This is one of the means and methods the government is planning to improve people's standard of living. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Mr. Prime Minister, how are your relations with the president?

[Al-Hariri] Excellent.

[Correspondent] There has been talk about differences and a conflict of powers [tashabuk salahiyat] between the two of you.

[Al-Hariri] There is no conflict of powers. Let me tell you this: The differences involving the three top leaders and the repercussions of these differences on the country are a serious issue. Let's us talk about it and explain it, because the perception should be clear. As we previously said, this country can only be ruled through accord. It is an accord among the president, the Chamber of Deputies speaker, and the prime minister as well as between the Council of Ministers and the Chamber of Deputies.

In the past, any differences between the president and the prime minister used to trigger a major problem in the country. This was because differences used to crop up over vital issues. There are no differences now, but they might crop up in the future. You have here three personalities, each of whom come from a different environment, is a different age, and has a different political background. Therefore, it is unlikely that the three think the same way. This is impossible. Isn't that true?

[Correspondent] Certainly.

[Al-Hariri] The most important thing is to find out which matters we agree on and over which ones we disagree.

There are no disagreements among the three leaders on foreign policy. There were disagreements in the past. There are no disagreements over the Army and security policy or on relations with Syria. There are no disagreements on whether to go to the negotiations. There are no disagreements on the economic policy. There are no disagreements over the security policy. Also, there are no disagreements on the financial policy.

Therefore, there are no disagreements on basic issues. The serious thing would be a disagreement over a crucial issue. There is no such issue. However, there could be a difference of views on insignificant issues. We would be dreaming if we asked the three leaders to think the same way. They have different ideas about perfectly ordinary matters. What is important, however, is that these matters should not affect the course of the state's progress.

There was a difference of opinion between the president and me [not further explained]. This ended after 42 hours, not 24. This is because the president had toothache the second day. I saw him on the third day and the problem was resolved immediately.

[Correspondent] Has this difference of opinion really been solved?

[Al-Hariri] Yes, it was resolved. Honestly, this problem was resolved.

[Correspondent] What about your relations with the Chamber of Deputies, which is the natural enemy of the government?

[Al-Hariri] No, it is not our natural enemy. Let me tell you this: We are in a democratic country accepted by the

Lebanese. The government exists in accordance with this system. I am the head of a government in accordance with this political system, which I accept. The tug-of-war between the government and the Chamber is also natural; otherwise, we would end up with either a parliamentary dictatorship or an administrative one.

If we thought that the Chamber should approve every draft law that the government recommends to it, then we would have an administrative dictatorship. This does not exist in the democratic system. If we thought that the Chamber should oppose or amend everything the government recommended, then we would have a parliamentary dictatorship. This does not exist in the democratic system.

There is interaction among the Chamber of Deputies, the Council of Ministers, and the executive branch. The question is whether this interaction is positive or negative. Interaction has been positive until now. No matter how long the delays may be, whether on the part of the government or the Chamber committees, the opposite would be far more harmful to the country. A bill may be delayed for some time. But if we presented a bill and they approved it within half an hour, this would mean that the Chamber was over and done with. Similarly, if every bill sent to the Chamber of Deputies was turned upside down, the government would be done with. The Lebanese must know that interaction with the Chamber of Deputies, differences of opinion, and the tug-of-war are natural in a democratic system. Things would be much easier in Lebanon if the governments were formed from the different parties; elections are held and people from blocs or parties win and form the government. Such a government would include ministers representing the deputies and who would present a certain issue within the framework of their party program. A minister who represents a certain bloc would apply the program of his bloc. Hence, bills would then be referred to and approved by the Chamber of Deputies on the basis of this policy that represents the ruling majority.

In Lebanon, there are deputies in the Chamber of Deputies and a government formed from within and outside the Chamber. However, this government is not based on deputy blocs. This makes the situation look uncomfortable from the outside. Eventually, a time will come when governments will be formed on the basis of deputy blocs within the Chamber, which is natural.

[Correspondent] Mr. Prime Minister, if you were to form a government now, would you form it in the same manner you did four months ago?

[Al-Hariri] I would keep it as it is.

[Correspondent] Without any changes?

[Al-Hariri] Let me tell you something. I am proud of each and every minister in the government. Each one is trying to do his job as best he can, depending on the resources available to him. We all are working and trying to serve the country as best we can. We cannot ask anyone to give more than what his resources allow. We only blame a man for his negligence; if he fails to do what he is able to do. I believe that every minister is trying to do what he can according to

the resources available to him. We have to refresh our memory. What was the situation like before this government was formed? It was not good.

[Correspondent] The economic situation...

[Al-Hariri, interrupting] Not only the economic situation. The economic situation was a mirror reflecting the political and general situation. The government is not al-Hariri alone. If Rafiq al-Hariri had tried to form a different government, he would not have been able to announce that government. This is the truth. With its present structure, its young men, its ministers—each assuming his position—this government has improved the situation in the country in the manner we have witnessed.

[Correspondent] Did you expect more from certain ministers?

[Al-Hariri] No. The ministers are working. But the people are in a hurry, as we said before.

[Correspondent] Let us open the file of national reconciliation.

[Correspondent] In your speech at the American University last summer, you focused on reconciliation. The cabinet statement and all the speeches and statements in the past four months stressed that national reconciliation is essential. That reflected determination to bring about national reconciliation. After four months, what has the government achieved in terms of national reconciliation, with particular emphasis on the Maronites?

[Al-Hariri] Let me tell you something. Salah; the issue of national reconciliation cannot be resolved in four, or even six months. You need to build roads to link everyone. We have emerged from a war, after which the al-Ta'if agreement was signed. As I said at American University, there were mistakes in implementing the al-Ta'if agreement. These mistakes caused people to confuse the incorrect implementation of al-Ta'if with the agreement itself. The al-Ta'if agreement was not meant to give the impression to a certain category that they had won and to another that they had lost. In essence, the al-Ta'if agreement provides for equality among all the Lebanese. If Muslims and Christians had lived under certain conditions in the past, the al-Ta'if agreement came to treat Muslims and Christians on the same footing. Any official who tries to give privileges to Muslims over Christians would be committing a crime against Muslims prior to the Christians and against the country. If anyone thinks that I am behaving in a different manner he must tell me that; it is his duty to tell me, because otherwise, we would waste the country like others have before. I am fully convinced of this. I would never let myself commit such a fatal mistake.

[Correspondent] You said that national reconciliation needs time. When will that time come? After a term expires, or with the beginning of a new term?

[Al-Hariri] No. I did not specify a certain date. You know that the situation is not easy. It is not a matter of bringing two people closer; it goes much deeper than that.

[Correspondent] Some things are easy and others are difficult. Why not start with the easiest?

[Al-Hariri] Teach me how.

[Correspondent] No, I will not.

[Al-Hariri] We are doing all we can at the leaders' and citizens' levels and in terms of assurances and development plans. We may have talked a lot about this, but this plan is part of al-Ta'if and national reconciliation.

[Correspondent] It is the foundation of national reconciliation.

[Al-Hariri] The foundation of national reconciliation is not mere talk. It is not a matter of bringing two people together and saying that the problem is solved. The Muslims' problems will not be solved if a specific person becomes prime minister. Equally, the Christians' problems will not be solved if a specific person becomes president. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Do reconciliation efforts cover all the Lebanese, including those who are outside Lebanon?

[Al-Hariri] This is the basic question: With whom should we reconcile?

[Correspondent] With all the parties inside and outside Lebanon?

[Al-Hariri] Let those who are outside Lebanon come back.

[Correspondent] Is this a basic condition for reconciliation?

[Al-Hariri] [words indistinct] Certain parties and political powers used to carry weight in Lebanon. The situation is different now. I do not mean differences between Muslims and Christians; powers shifted and people's status differed.

[Correspondent] Are there contacts with General Michel 'Awn?

[Al-Hariri] You mean on my part personally?

[Correspondent] Yes.

[Al-Hariri] No.

[Correspondent] On the part of the state or the government?

[Al-Hariri] No. In fact a legal solution was worked out for the issue of Gen. 'Awn before I took office. An agreement was reached and sponsored by many parties. No party has approached me with a desire to change that agreement. I hear people talk, but I have received no official request to change the articles of that agreement. According to that agreement, Gen. 'Awn left for France to spend five years outside Lebanon. As long as I have not received an official request or have not been approached in any manner with a request to change that agreement... [changes thought] The decision is not mine; there is a government and there are institutions to decide on the matter. But I have received no such a request. We hear that Gen. 'Awn wants to engage in a dialogue. On what basis would that dialogue be held? This is on the one hand. On the other hand, time flies; two of the five years have already passed. I have no

objection to discussing the issue before the five-year term expires. Something may happen; and it may not. But I will not discuss something that has no substance. Once the term expires, there will be no objection to Gen. 'Awn returning. He may stay, form a political party, enter the elections, and do whatever he wants. If he wants to do something before the term expires, there is a state he can approach with a dialogue proposal. We have not received any such request from 'Awn or from the people who were involved in that subject. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Let us go back to the al-Ta'if Accord, or to the rectification of the implementation of this accord, if it can be so called. Some parties who are supposed to be involved in the reconciliation believe that rectification of the al-Ta'if Accord's implementation presupposes implementation of the clause on imposing sovereignty and...

[Al-Hariri, interrupting] And the redeployment of the Syrian Army in Lebanon. Yes.

[Correspondent] ...and the disbandment of the militias and the collection of their weapons in all areas, that is all to be treated equally. How is the government dealing with this issue?

[Al-Hariri] Look, there are two issues. One is the disbandment of the militias. You are speaking as if the militias have not been disbanded.

[Correspondent] Some parties are demanding the dismantling of all the militias.

[Al-Hariri] All the militias have been disbanded.

[Correspondent] Not all have been disbanded or their weapons collected.

[Al-Hariri] Such as?

[Correspondent] Such as Hizballah's weapons.

[Al-Hariri] Where are Hizballah's weapons? Yesterday I saw a parade staged by Hizballah. They were carrying sticks. I saw them on television carrying sticks. I saw neither Kalashnikov rifles nor machine guns. They were not riding in military vehicles. They were wearing ninja uniforms and carrying sticks in their hands. This is not forbidden. The law does not prevent wearing these uniforms and carrying sticks. Some time ago, we heard about a dispute between two parties in the country. Had this dispute occurred in the past, then it would have been decided through shells. But in this one, not a single person slapped another. No one swore at another. Right? The state, that is the security organs, are finding weapons caches in the villages every day. The collection of weapons and discovery of weapons caches will continue.

Now if you are speaking about the Lebanese resistance against the Israeli occupation and asking the state to disarm the resistance, the state cannot do this. As long as Israel occupies the south, the state will not disarm the resistance. Israel has not left nor has it promised to leave within a certain period. What is required of the state? Is it

required to let Israel sit comfortably in occupied Lebanese territory? What kind of logic is that?

[Correspondent] Regarding reconciliation, Mr. Prime Minister.

[Al-Hariri, interrupting] We have not finished. I am not avoiding giving an answer on the issue of redeployment. Redeployment is mentioned in the al-Ta'if Accord. Under this accord, Syria will help the Lebanese state impose its authority within a certain period. We were supposed to receive aid for the Army and internal security forces. Up to the now the only aid Lebanese has received in the past three years is \$160 million from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for civilian purposes and a small part of it for matters related to the Army and the internal security forces—not for weapons but for uniforms and such. The other part was earmarked for civilian purposes, such as the capital's streets and so on.

Actually it was Syria, and no one else, that helped the Lebanese Army. It was Syria that helped us collect the militias' weapons. It was Syria that sent weapons to the Lebanese Army. It was also Syria that sent ammunition to the Lebanese Army.

We are currently contacting friendly countries to help us equip the Lebanese Army and the Lebanese internal security forces so that they can assume the responsibilities of security. We should not risk the security issue in the country (?at the expense) of concluding an agreement between two friendly countries. When we feel safe—and this is not evasion, it is the truth—neither do the Syrians want to deploy their Army here and leave their sons here without any justification except for ensuring stability and security in the country, nor do we want the Syrians to leave their sons here far from their country, homeland, and family. It is the duty of the Lebanese people and Army to be responsible for security.

Yesterday, the U.S. ambassador told the foreign minister that they will start training officers and might send us weapons. We also expect the French to help us. We are going to get our weapons from the countries that manufacture the weapons and that provide equipment, training, and other things. As soon as we receive enough, I don't think there will be any problems.

[Correspondent] Mr. Prime Minister, It has been noticed that all the meetings between Lebanon and Syria are held in Damascus. Is there any thought of holding such meetings in Beirut from time to time?

[Al-Hariri] We will be honored if President al-Asad visits us. However, this question should be addressed to him. [laughter] I hope this happens. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] There are cabinet members who think they are not consulted on political decisions, including appointments. They feel that issues concerning appointments are being arranged by the three leaders, if I may say so. Is it true?

[Al-Hariri] This talk is not accurate. The Council of Ministers is made up of 30 ministers. There are several

ways to propose the issue of appointments or any other issue. Appointments are like any other issue. If every minister proposes 200 names, it will become like the Tower of Babel. We might ask a committee to propose names and we also might authorize the prime minister [word indistinct] and the competent ministers to propose names for various posts. You cannot ask 30 people all to prepare this. You can ask one, two, or three to prepare and propose. Please rest assured that matters handled by the Council of Ministers are extremely democratic. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] To conclude, Mr. Prime Minister, you promised achievements, but the people are waiting for miracles. We hope that you and your government will be able to perform this miracle.

[Al-Hariri] Miracles are performed by people, not individuals. We came here to this position with the objective of building this state through national will. If there is no national will, as I said earlier, there is no homeland. Without men of state, there is no state. Therefore, I hope all officials will behave like men of state and I hope all Lebanese will cling to their national will when constructing this homeland.

Undoubtedly, the plans we are laying down need some time. But the most important thing we are accomplishing or have accomplished so far ... [pauses] You asked me at the beginning of the interview what I have accomplished. I have restored confidence [words indistinct]. Let us go back in time a few months and see what this means. There is confidence internally and externally. This confidence is in the homeland, not only in Rafiq al-Hariri. If this confidence is in Rafiq al-Hariri, then my duty dictates that it should infiltrate the institutions, Lebanon. The confidence should be transferred to Lebanon, not to me in person. This is what I am doing and what I am trying to accomplish. Of course, I cannot do this alone. It takes two to tango. This country is not mine alone. It cannot be ruled by one person, nor does it belong to one person alone. No one can control it single-handedly, not states, institutions, individuals, parties, sects, or religions. This country is for all. We ask everyone to put their hands in ours to render this march a success. This is not rhetoric. These are words that have to rise above the person, above his narrow interests, petty issues, and tactics. We cannot build a homeland in any other way.

There could come a time when we start using tactics and direct our attention toward petty things. But to get to that stage we need some time. We need time to allow those working in public affairs to look into minor issues. We need time to build this homeland for everyone, and for our sons in particular, all of whom are looking up to us to see how we are entrenching the bases for building a strong, competent, just, and balanced state, where people are equal before the law and justice as well as in rights and duties. This is the way I see things, and this is how I have promised God, myself, and the people to perform my task. I might make mistakes. I might not make sound decisions. I might not succeed, but I will definitely try. I extend my hands to all the good people and all the faithful in

Lebanon, the Lebanon of coexistence, Lebanon the sovereign, free, and independent. We cannot achieve this Lebanon through individual efforts and cannot establish it through empty words or through middlemen or wasting money. We can only establish this Lebanon by believing in our words and implementing them.

These words might be said by someone else. Anybody else might say them in a better way. Perhaps there are many people who say things, intend to do them, and then actually do them. But the sure thing is that I mean every word I say.

[Correspondent] Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister.

Commentary on al-Hariri Interview

NC2303110993 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Political commentary]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. The time has arrived, the day of reckoning has come, and the spring season has begun. The citizen is looking for hope to dispel some of his worries and sorrow. The prime minister has pinned the people's hopes on spring. The Lebanese citizens have begun speaking of spring as poets do when they write about the night, the moon, the sea, and love. As soon as the Lebanese citizen emerges from one economic crisis he enters into another. The Lebanese citizen has started to believe that the al-Hariri promises are a magic wand that can accomplish miracles. As one poem says: How difficult life would be were it not for hope.

Hopes have been pinned on al-Hariri promises, not out of confidence in his credibility, but because a drowning person will try to hold onto a piece of straw. The people waited for the beginning of spring, joyfully singing for its approach. They were optimistic about the end of winter coldness, oppressiveness, and hunger, following a fall of need, that has hurt a considerable segment of the people in this country.

We would not be exaggerating if we said that some of the naive ones awaited al-Hariri's spring like a fasting man awaits the end of the day during Ramadan. Those in the know were surprised by all the praise showered on the man who would save the country and people from the crises. If they expressed their views on the ability of the man, they were accused of being against the citizens. So they waited, like the others, for the results of the regime and the government, with the old saying in mind: If you do not teach your child, life will teach him.

We are now at the beginning of spring. We see the spring blooming in nature, blossoming in trees. As for the spring that was supposed to lay the foundation for the modern state, the spring of development and construction, the spring of services, roads, electricity, and telephones—none of this materialized. We got only al-Hariri's salutations and justifications on Sunday [21 March]. He spoke about the government's term in office and said that he does not want to do patchwork. He said that there are thorny files that have been put aside because they involved problems.

He noted in his interview that there are big problems, and these cannot be solved at once. He said his government has prepared programs and plans and scheduled priorities, and that within a few months things will start rolling. When the citizen hears these justifications, he becomes disappointed, because he was not prepared to hear that things will start rolling after some time. He expected to reap the fruits of what was implemented some months ago and to welcome the spring with all the citizens' dreams.

Are we to understand that when he promised the people a spring of accomplishments that al-Hariri did not think about all these obstacles? If he was aware of them, why did he make promises he cannot fulfill? Who said that the task awaiting the prime minister is easy? If problems could not be solved all together, was any one of these intricate problems solved? If al-Hariri admitted that the citizen is right to complain about services, why didn't he give him some now and leave the rest for later, instead of burdening him with taxes, prices, and the dollar exchange rate? Does the solution, in his view, lie in promising the citizen a development and reconstruction plan for the year 2000—not for the approaching spring? The people will have to wait for the outcome of this plan—if they can live that long, if they can withstand the hunger in the coming months and years, and if the envisioned accomplishments do not remain promises, children's dreams, and rulers' narcotic.

Buwayz Says Peace Talks Need 'Further Momentum'

NC2203191393 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Statement by Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz after meeting with Prime Minister al-Hariri on 22 March, followed by remarks in response to questions—recorded; broadcast in progress]

[Text] [Buwayz] ...in light of the regional situation. I briefed the prime minister on the meeting scheduled later this week in Damascus and on my upcoming visits to Qatar and China. We also discussed several (?administrative) issues concerning the internal situation, particularly the Foreign Ministry.

[Question indistinct]

[Buwayz] Actually the U.S.-Russian move plays a role in this issue but not the whole role. There are regional considerations that no one can ignore. A review of the situation by the participating countries will create a unified stand. We still believe that the peace conference, discontinued at the end of President Bush's term of office and the start of Clinton's, needs now more than ever before further positive measures that would give the impression that it is credible and serious. It basically needs further momentum. Undoubtedly, we have not yet sensed exceptional momentum commensurate with the magnitude of the issue and with the Arab countries' responsiveness to this conference.

[Question indistinct]

[Buwayz] The substance of these messages suggests that there is a serious attempt to engage in more effective talks. We will assess all these matters more carefully and exchange views with other participating Arab delegations.

[Question indistinct]

[Buwayz] Up until now, the Palestinian stand is vague on a final decision whether or not to participate. In any case, we have decided not to take stands outside the framework of the Arab delegations, which (?will) meet to discuss this question. We are confident that a comprehensive assessment from various aspects is required to examine the seriousness of dealing with any likely invitation. Naturally there are various stands that may be adopted, not necessarily just rejection or acceptance. Perhaps there are alternative proposals we might put forth on suitable timing and on ensuring better circumstances to resume the talks.

Al-Hariri Leaves for 'Brief' Visit to Damascus

NC2103122993 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1145 GMT 21 Mar 93

[Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri left for Damascus today on a brief and unscheduled visit. He is expected to return to Beirut this evening. The visit comes one week after the summit between Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad.

Article Says Keep Syria Out of Domestic Affairs

NC1903185593 Beirut AL-DIYAR in Arabic 15 Mar 93 p 1

[Article by Charles Ayyub: "What Is Important Is That Officials Are Convinced Lebanon Is an Independent State"]

[Text] As the Lebanese-Syrian summit ends and we remember the visits to Syria by Chamber of Deputies Speaker Birri, Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, and all the former Lebanese prime ministers, Chamber speakers, and presidents, we pause over a fundamental point: coordination with Damascus and alliance between Beirut and the Syrian capital are one thing, while involving Syria in every Lebanese detail ranging from the appointment of an employee to differences among leaders is another and is bad.

Syria and President al-Asad's leadership have supported Lebanon. As a result, Lebanon regained its health, the separate accords with Israel came down, a new Constitution was drawn up, presidential elections were held, governments were formed, and the Lebanese Army deployed in almost all Lebanese territories with support from the Syrian Army.

This is our view of the relationship with Syria. We also believe a new stage should begin; Lebanese officials must be convinced that Lebanon is a state in every sense of the word, independent and able to make its own resolutions. They must also be convinced that Lebanon is not a Syrian governorate the internal affairs of which can get discussed at Lebanese-Syrian meetings.

Syria has extended the required support and has enough of its own issues to deal with. So Lebanese officials must be convinced that the best way to build the Lebanese state is by not keeping Damascus busy with Lebanon's domestic details and by not having every level of official visit Syria to discuss appointments in the electricity and water companies, Customs Department, or ministry administrations.

Summits of officials and meetings among ministers should be held to coordinate on dealing with primary issues, most importantly confronting the Israeli enemy. But, excluding this visit by President al-Hirawi, we only notice Lebanese officials visiting to complain about each other and to ask Damascus to appoint a director general or an official. We also notice ministers and deputies carrying news files and reports about Lebanese domestic affairs as if their influence in Lebanon is based only on their ability as informers.

Lebanese-Syrian relations are eternal, so they should be strategic. We should stop discussing Lebanon's domestic affairs on visits to Damascus and officials should stop complaining about each other. Lebanon is an independent state and so it should remain. Syria too has its own concerns, which are enough for her. Syria's support for establishing the Lebanese state is enough.

You could say talks are always on strategic issues and ask: From where do you learn that Lebanese officials discuss Lebanon's domestic affairs during their visits to Damascus?

Our answer is that journalists hear nothing from officials in Beirut but statements that they discussed Lebanese domestic affairs during their visits.

What remains to be said is that Lebanon has come a long way on the road to reconciliation and toward a genuine state. Officials must be convinced that they belong to an independent state and are not responsible for a governorate. Then they may discuss a strategic alliance and stop discussing tedious Lebanese domestic affairs, with which the Lebanese people are bored and with which we also believe that Damascus too has become bored.

Russian Envoy Meets al-Hirawi, Comments on Talks
NC2203134793 Shanayh Voice of the Mountain in Arabic 1230 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] President Ilyas al-Hirawi received Viktor Posuvalyuk, the head of the Russian Foreign Ministry's Middle East and Africa Department, and reviewed developments in the Arab-Israeli negotiations.

After the meeting, the Russian official said the discussions focused on the peace process and bilateral relations, adding: We listened with interest to President al-Hirawi's valuable ideas, which we will convey to the leadership in Moscow. He said the conference's two sponsors call on the parties concerned to participate in the (next) round despite the current difficulties, which we hope to overcome.

The Russian official discussed whether he sensed a Lebanese and Syrian intention to attend the next round, saying: We believe in the constructive stand of the Lebanese and Syrian Governments. We regard a mere meeting of the

delegations as a positive measure and hope the delegations will discuss the issues in depth. We are sure they will.

Al-Rantisi Comments on Jerusalem Stabbing

NC2203151293 Shanayh Voice of the Mountain in Arabic 1230 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Excerpt] At his news conference today, Palestinian deportees spokesman Dr. 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Rantisi addressed Islamic nations and leaders. He said: 'Id al-Fitr is approaching and the Security Council is playing down Resolution 799 because it is against the pampered State of Israel. The United Nations has proven its hostility towards Islamic nations and leaders and its support for the Zionist terrorism in Palestine.

He added: We urge the world's Muslims to adopt a stand on the United Nations, which is now declaring war on the Muslims.

Commenting on the stabbing of nine Israelis in Palestine today, he said: I tell Rabin and the corrupters: You have no place in Palestine, so get out of there. We have renounced occupation. As more of your soldiers deploy in the occupied land, the more targets the Palestinian heroes have.

On Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz' statement after his meeting with the Russian envoy that the failure to implement Resolution 799 is an obstacle, al-Rantisi said: This is Lebanon's firm and consistent position. Therefore, it has become obvious to the Security Council, the United Nations, and the Zionists that there is no alternative to implementing Resolution 799.

He addressed the Palestinian mujahidin on the advent of 'Id al-Fitr, saying: You are in your nation's forward trench. You are this nation's honor. You open the path to glory as you sacrifice for your nation's dignity and the liberation of your sanctities. May God guide you and bring victory at your hands. Greetings to you from your brother deportees. You say to the enemy: We will turn the earth to hell under your feet until you flee in terror.

He addressed the world's Muslims and Christians on the occasion of 'Id al-Fitr, saying: You are witnessing the Zionists saboteurs' destruction and the brutal killing of children, women, and other civilians, taking children away from their mothers. You see the aggrieved Palestinian people, whose economic and educational infrastructure and morale have been devastated. O, Islamic nation, why remain silent?

He said: We say to our Christian brothers: Do not blame the Muslims if they return to purge Palestine of the Jews' filth, which, should it persist, will expand to destroy the Christians' interests worldwide. The Jewish cancer will not be satisfied with corruption in Palestine, and we know this. [passage omitted]

Deportees Said Divided Over Jerusalem Day

NC1903204993 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1915
GMT 19 Mar 93

[Text] A split emerged today among the Palestinians deported to Lebanon when some of them demonstrated to mark the Iranian-proclaimed Jerusalem Day while others remained in their tents.

When spokesman 'Abd-al-'Aziz al-Rantisi said Jerusalem Day will not be celebrated without addressing a cable of support to Iran, Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Shami, an Islamic Jihad member, called for a demonstration. Al-Rantisi called him a liar. Islamic Jihad supporters demonstrated while the rest remained in their tents.

Hizballah Marks Jerusalem Day in Beirut Rally

NC2003085793 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 20 Mar 93

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] A big celebration to mark Jerusalem Day was held in Beirut's southern suburb during which speeches were delivered by his eminence the Hizballah secretary general, the Iranian charge d'affaires in Beirut, and a representative of the Islamic Jihad movement in Palestine. The speeches focused on the importance and significance of Jerusalem Day. [passage omitted]

Speaking on behalf of the Islamic Jihad movement, Abu-Ahmad 'Isam denounced the capitulation negotiations and the negotiators' submission to the enemy's conditions. He said that the submission of the negotiations has encouraged the enemy to suppress the Palestinian mujahid and the resisting Lebanese and to deport more than 400 Palestinians to Marj al-Zuhur without any regard to international law and organizations. He said that marking Jerusalem Day means getting closer to Islam and its principles and failure to celebrate this day means a departure from Islam. He stressed that the option is jihad and Islamic unity to confront the satanic schemes.

Iranian Charge d'Affaires Homaun 'Alizadeh conveyed the Iranian leaders' salutation to the faithful mujahidin of the intifadah, the deportees in Marj al-Zuhur, and the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon, particularly its mujahidin and martyrs. [passage omitted]

The Jerusalem Day celebration was concluded with the speech of Hizballah Secretary General Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah, who denounced the Zionist entity and the arrogant states that created this entity and are supplying it with the material and military means to survive. He said that Jerusalem Day does not concern the Palestinians alone, but all Muslims, Christians, and oppressed people in the world. This is because Jerusalem is the responsibility of the heavenly religions. [passage omitted]

Sayyid Nasrallah noted that the people who are suffering as a result of the Zionist actions will suffer more savage terrorism and repression after the so-called settlement. Zionist rule will enter every house, and the Arabs' battle will be among themselves and between the regimes and

their peoples. The Zionist will then stand proud, holding on to the destinies of all the Arabs.

Responding to those who are afraid of the dismal future, he said that in this atmosphere the resistance and intifadah will be greater and more powerful and will continue the struggle to erase the usurping entity from existence. This is God's promise. No peace or capitulation by the Arabs will fortify Israel's existence.

Sayyid Nasrallah reiterated his commitment to the resistance policy and readiness for sacrifice. He said: We will remain the vanguards who will light the way by their blood until the entire nation wakes up, and it has begun to wake up. Everyone from France and the other European countries to the United States is talking about the wave of fundamentalism in the Islamic world today and the need to confront it. They level charges of terrorism against the Islamists, but fail to see the same in the Zionist entity. We will not get a complex about this accusation, because America is the first international terrorist. We do not need absolution from the United States. [passage omitted]

Minister Details Financial Agreements With France

NC2003172593 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1400
GMT 20 Mar 93

[Text] State Minister for Finance Fu'ad Sinyurah returned to Beirut from Paris this afternoon. He said upon arrival at Beirut airport:

[Begin recording] [Sinyurah] After Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri's visit to Paris and his meeting with French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, several rounds of talks were held between Lebanese and French Finance Ministry representatives. I met yesterday with French Economy and Finance Minister Michel Sapin to discuss further financial cooperation between Lebanon and France and to review all pending financial issues between the two countries, specifically the nonmilitary trade protocol. We reached agreements on many important things, notably the rescheduling of nonmilitary debts. Lebanon was granted many exemptions, and it was agreed that Lebanon should receive a number of grants and easy-term loans. It also was agreed that the French loan-guarantee establishment, COFACE [French Insurance Company for Foreign Trade], should resume its activity by allowing Lebanon to use its facilities. This means that Lebanese Government institutions can benefit from French loan guarantees through COFACE. This applies to not only the public sector, but also to the private sector.

[Unidentified correspondent] Mr. Minister, when will we receive the French grant—30 million French francs?

[Sinyurah] This will not be the only grant; many others, comprising greater sums, also will be provided. The Lebanese and French Governments will reach agreements on the sectors that will benefit from the grants. But basically, they are devoted for education, culture, city planning, agriculture, technical training, and many other sectors.

[Correspondent] Mr. Minister, you spoke about the rescheduling of Lebanon's debts to France. Have you agreed on a new time limit?

[Sinyurah] Yes. A timeframe satisfactory for Lebanon and harmonious with relevant international norms has been set.

[Correspondent] Does the new date give us enough time?

[Sinyurah] It is enough. In addition to this, the French Government promised to assist Lebanon in many other ways, particularly through France's membership in the European Community and other international institutions. The importance of this agreement is that it reinforces Lebanon's international credibility in its relations with the world. This is extremely important for Lebanon because it needs the support of its friends in the world through grants, easy-term loans, or commercial loans. Lebanon's respect for all its outstanding obligations is very important. We believe this is essential. [end recording]

Interior Minister on Fundamentalism, Security
 NC2103133993 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1130 GMT
 21 Mar 93

[Excerpts] Beirut, 21 Mar (MENA)—Lebanese Interior Minister Bisharah Mirhij has condemned acts of violence and terrorism by certain extremist Islamic fundamentalist groups in a number of Arab countries. He said that these groups are tools belonging to the past and they are prisoners of a framework that does not suit the genuine spirit of Islam. They are trying to impose their views on society and confront it. He pointed out that Islam emphasizes freedom and tolerance and affords man the freedom to choose and have beliefs free from coercion.

In an exclusive statement to MENA, Mirhij warned of the repercussions of the growth of this phenomenon of extremism and violence against the Arab nation. He noted that the Arab masses' adherence to their religious faith and genuine Islamic principles constitutes a natural immunity against the dangers to the Arab nation resulting from these fundamentalist movements. [passage omitted].

Mirhij attributed the growth of the fundamentalist trend in the Arab region to several factors, most important of which are Israel's extremism, its continued aggressive and intransigent policies, mounting repressive measures against the Palestinians in the occupied territory, its adamant attitude toward the peace overtures, continued maneuvering around and circumventing UN resolutions, and persistent attempts to interfere in the Arab countries' affairs and social and religious beliefs. He said that this phenomenon is also linked to the deterioration in the economic situation in the Arab world, the drop in oil prices, and the widening gap between the requirements of development and social needs. Further, the repercussions of the Gulf war contributed to wasting Arab wealth and mortgaging the bulk of this wealth in international capitalist centers. He pointed out that the combination of these factors generated a state of resentment and negative reaction among the broad masses in the Arab countries, enhancing the rise and growth of these fundamentalist movements. A part of these

fundamentalist movements upholds extremist calls as a reaction to Israeli extremism. [passage omitted]

On the security situation in southern Lebanon, Mirhij said that security in the south is a special case, whereby the Army shoulders security responsibility in certain areas while UN forces supervise security in other areas. Noting the presence of the national Lebanese resistance in certain areas to confront Israeli acts of aggression, he said the resistance constitutes a legitimate right that receives national support.

On the Lebanese security authorities' position on continued physical liquidations and disputes among Palestinian groups inside the Palestinian camps in southern Lebanon, Mirhij said that the Lebanese security forces pursue any violations on Lebanese territory, whether by Lebanese or any other groups. However, the Lebanese Security authorities exhort these groups to reach understanding and reconciliation among themselves and to refrain from using weapons. [passage omitted]

Phalangist Centers To Be Handed to 'Legitimate' Leadership

NC2003184893 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 20 Mar 93

[Excerpt] Phalangist Party leader George Sa'adah has announced that the specialized authorities at the beginning of next week will start handing over party centers to the legitimate party leadership. He said this follows the public appeals prosecutor's decision that the centers should be handed over to party's legitimate authority, which is represented by the party leader and the Political Bureau. [passage omitted]

Presidential Decree Amends Titles of Ministers

NC1903124193 Shanayh Voice of the Mountain in Arabic 1000 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Text] A presidential decree has amended the names of the Ministry of Refugee Affairs and the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs.

The text of the decree is as follows:

Decree No. 3287:

In accordance with the constitution, especially Article 53; in accordance with Decree No. 2900, dated 31 October 1992, on the formation of the government; in accordance with Law No. 190, dated 4 January 1993, on the creation of the Ministry of Refugee Affairs; in accordance with Law No. 197, dated 18 February 1993, on the creation of the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs; and on the recommendation of the prime minister, the president decrees the following:

Article 1: Article 1 of Decree No. 2900 and its amendments on the formation of the government have been amended as follows: Walid Junblatt, minister of refugee affairs; and Sulayman Franjiyah, minister of municipal and rural affairs; replacing Walid Junblatt, minister of

state for refugee affairs; and Sulayman Franjiyah, minister of state for municipal and rural affairs.

Article 2: This decree will be published, circulated as necessary, and become effective immediately.

Issued by the president and the prime minister.

Mujahidin Said To Kill 5 in 'Martyrdom Operation'

NC2203135193 *Shanayh Voice of the Mountain in Arabic* 1230 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] Resistance sources report that a mujahidin carried out a martyrdom operation in Birkat Arnun, using a car against a passing mechanized Israeli patrol. The patrol consisted of three military vehicles, including a tank and a half-tracked vehicle. According to eyewitnesses, five Zionist soldiers were killed and a vehicle was destroyed. Security reports indicate that the occupation forces sent mechanized reinforcements to Arnun and that two helicopters evacuated the wounded from al-Hamra' Farm and Arnun.

SLA Radio Denies 'Suicide Operation'

NC2203150993 *(Clandestine) Voice of the South in Arabic to Lebanon* 1430 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] According to our military correspondent, a patrol of the South Lebanese Army [SLA] this afternoon clashed with a terrorist group in the Arnun area. Two terrorists were killed and a number of others were injured in the fighting.

Our correspondent added that an SLA unit, backed by artillery, carried out a major search operation in the area. The SLA personnel found the weapons and equipment of the two dead terrorists. Other weapons, which were abandoned by the fleeing terrorists, were also found during the search.

Local radios said that the villages of Kafr Tibnit, Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, Zawtar al-Gharbiyah, the outskirts of al-Nabatiyah, Yuhmur, and Arnun were bombarded today. The radios said that four people were injured and were transferred to the al-Nabatiyah hospitals.

Sources of the so-called Islamic Resistance said that one of its members carried out a suicide operation near Birkat Arnun, using a Toyota, against a passing mechanized patrol. Our military correspondent refuted the report and denied that any casualties were inflicted on SLA troops.

Hizballah Denies Two Killed in Clash

NC2203210193 *Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic* 2015 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] Two Hizballah men were killed earlier in a clash with a Major General Lahd forces' patrol near al-Shaqif castle in the security zone, according to the South Lebanese Army. But Hizballah denied that there are any victims among its ranks. After that, there was an exchange of shelling on both sides of the security strip, killing one citizen and injuring five others.

The Army Command's Guidance Directorate said that the Lebanese Army confronted the Israeli planes that flew over Iqlim al-Tuffah this evening with anti-aircraft fire.

Enemy Casualties Reported in 'Lightning Attacks'

NC2303074593 *Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic* 0630 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] At 1415 yesterday, the Islamic Resistance carried out lightening attacks against four enemy positions in al-Dabshah, 'Ali al-Tahir, al-Shaqif, and al-Burj overlooking Kafr Rumman. The Islamic Resistance used automatic weapons and rockets. The mujahidin were able to destroy a number of emplacements and killed or wound a number of troops. Security sources said that the Arnun operation alone left five enemy and agent soldiers killed or wounded.

Following these surprise attacks, the enemy indiscriminately shelled a number of villages and areas in the south adjacent to the occupied border strip, killing Ibrahim 'Ali Mahdi al-Akhras and wounding two others in Kafr Tibnit. The shelling also left four civilians wounded in Kafr Rumman.

Yesterday, Zionist warplanes made frequent flights over Jabal Safi, Iqlim al-Tuffah, Sidon, the Palestinian camps, and Beirut, repeatedly breaking the sound barrier.

The Zionist forces resumed their attacks against the liberated southern villages yesterday evening. The villages of Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, Zawtar al-Gharbiyah, and the al-Litani River basin came under large-caliber shell fire from the occupation force's positions in al-Zaffatah.

Amal-Hizballah Groups Attack Southern Positions

NC2103075593 *Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic* 0630 GMT 21 Mar 93

[Text] A joint group from the Islamic Resistance and Amal Movement has launched a lightning attack against the Sujud position with rockets and machine guns, killing two and seriously wounding four others. A statement by Hizballah and Amal noted that at the same time another group from the party and the movement attacked the (Bi'r Kallab) position, killing two of the people manning the position.

Following the operation, the enemy shelled the Iqlim al-Tuffah region with heavy artillery, targeting Mlita and Jabal Safi in particular. According to information, Mlita hills, Jabal Safi, and the outskirts of al-Luwayzah and Mlikh came under Zionist artillery shelling from the occupation positions in Sujud and al-'Ayshiyah shortly after 2100 last night. Illumination flares were fired over al-Litani River basin, Mazra'at al-Hamra', Zawtar al-Gharbiyah, and Zawtar al-Sharqiyah.

'Enemy' Warplanes Draw Fire Over al-Biq'a'

NC2303072593 *Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic* 0630 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] At 0747 today, enemy warplanes flew at medium altitude over western al-Biq'a', breaking the sound barrier and drawing anti-aircraft fire from the Islamic Resistance.

Afghanistan**Assassination Attempt Against Rabbani Reported**

BK2303090993 Islamabad THE NEWS in English
23 Mar 93 p 12

[By Anwar Iqbal—all place names as received]

[Text] Islamabad: President Borhannodin Rabbani escaped an attempt on his life outside Kabul Monday while on his way to meet his arch rival Golboddin Hekmatyar. Reports the Afghan Islamic Press [AIP] news agencies.

The agency, which is affiliated with the Yunes Khaless group of mujahedins, said Rabbani's convoy came under heavy gun and artillery fire near Hoodkhel about 10 km east of Kabul.

Quoting sources in the presidential office, the agency said Rabbani was going to Butt-e Khak, about 20 km from Kabul, for a meeting with Hekmatyar, the prime minister-designate of Afghanistan.

Mujahedin sources in Pakistan said Hekmatyar left the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad Monday morning for an undisclosed destination near Kabul.

They said the two leaders had planned to meet outside Kabul to discuss their differences. The two rivals and six other mujahedins signed an accord in Islamabad two weeks ago to end their fratricidal fighting.

But they could not implement it because of differences over the fate of defence minister Ahmad Shah Mas'ud and Hekmatyar's proposed return to Kabul.

Rabbani wanted to retain Mas'ud and had also asked Hekmatyar to come to Kabul without his soldiers while Hekmatyar had asked Mas'ud to step down and he wanted to bring his men for his own security.

However, the sources said not many among the mujahedins knew about this unscheduled meeting between Rabbani and Hekmatyar.

Rabbani's convoy came under fire when it reached Hoodkhel and was able to retreat [words indistinct] returning the unidentified enemy's fire.

AIP said the government officials in Kabul confirmed that the presidential convoy came under attack outside the city but refused to give further details.

Both Hekmatyar and Mas'ud have a strong presence in Hoodkhel but officials refused to say who might have arranged the assassination attempt.

Asked why did the president go by road, an official said it was the safest option. "Going by helicopter would have been more risky and several groups in the area have Stinger missiles and a low flying helicopter can also be shot by RPG-7s, a common weapon in Afghanistan."

Hekmatyar Confirms Meeting of Jehadi Leaders Near Kabul

LD2203125893 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0830 GMT
22 Mar 93

[Excerpts] Mujahed Brother Hekmatyar, leader of the Hezb-e Eslami, said at a news conference in Jalalabad yesterday that the meeting of all the jihadi leaders will be held after 'Id al-Fitr, near Kabul, and will finalize the formation of the cabinet.

The Radio Message of Freedom correspondent reports from Jalalabad city that Mujahed Brother Hekmatyar, leader of the Hezb-e Eslami Afghanistan and prime minister of the forthcoming government, issued a press statement after the meeting of leaders and representatives of the jihadi organizations in Jalalabad yesterday. The statement says with regard to the ending of the sessions and the forthcoming meeting of jihadi leaders: Our sessions will continue in an atmosphere of fraternal understanding and full cooperation. Were it not for the joint visits to Saudi Arabia and Iran, which delayed the session, the work of forming the cabinet would have been completed.

Brother Hekmatyar added: It has been decided that a meeting of the jihadi organizations' leaders will be held on 9 Hamal 1372 [corresponding to 29 March 1993], and the work of forming the cabinet will be completed in that session. The session, which will be held at a suitable venue in the area around Kabul, will be participated in only by the leaders of the jihadi organizations and not by their representatives.

The leader of the Hezb-e Eslami said that the venue for the session has been decided but for security reasons its disclosure is avoided. The formation of the cabinet will be fully discussed in the meeting and the cabinet will be finalized. Joint sessions of the leaders and representatives of jihadi organizations ended in Jalalabad after approving the next session of the leaders. [passage omitted]

Answering a question from a Radio Message of Freedom correspondent about the joint sessions of leaders and representatives of the jihadi organizations, Brother Qazi Mohammad Amin Waqad remarked: Much progress was made during the several days of talks but in line with Islamabad Accord the work on forming the cabinet will be finalized in a joint session of jihadi leaders. Preliminary work in this respect has all been completed, and its results are, thank God, hopeful. The jihadi leaders' meeting after the 'Id will be a second happiness for the people and, God willing, all the wishes of the people of Afghanistan will be positively answered by this session of the leaders.

Hekmatyar Urges Parliamentary Elections Within 8 Months

LD2303141793 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0900 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Excerpt] Brother Hekmatyar, leader of Hezb-e Eslami Afghanistan, in an interview with a correspondent of the JANG newspaper of Pakistan said: After the signing of

Islamabad accord the most important issue for us is the holding of election within six to eight months and the formation of an elected parliament.

Correspondent of Radio Message of Freedom reports from Jalalabad city that Brother Hekmatyar, in an interview with JANG noted: Work on the cabinet of the forthcoming Government of Afghanistan has [words indistinct] and its draft is approved but for some expediencies its official announcement was delayed for nine days. After nine days all jihadi leaders will come together in the surrounding of Kabul and will finalize the formation of the Cabinet in a session.

The Hezb-e Eslami Afghanistan leader added: A series of successes were achieved in the sessions of leaders and representatives of eight jihadi organizations. The sessions ended in an atmosphere of fraternity and cooperation. If too much time had not been spent on visits to Saudi Arabia and Iran, the work of the formation of the Cabinet would have completed by now.

Brother Hekmatyar added: It is our wish for all jihadi parties to take part in this government and this government has no opponent. If an organization wants a further position in the government and considers itself larger than others, we hope that they wait until elections are held so that their strength is verified by the elections.

The Hezb-e Eslami leader said: We are determined to hold elections. Now after the Islamabad accord the most important issue for us is to hold elections which will be held within six to eight months so that there will be an elected parliament. [passage omitted]

Mojahedin Crush Robbers Along Qandahar-Herat Highway

LD2203142793 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0830 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] A group of armed thieves and robbers were crushed by brave mojahedin along the Qandahar-Herat highway, and a large quantity of their weapons was captured. A wireless report from the jihadi leadership of Qandahar Province says: Some days ago the brave mojahedin of the province crushed a group of armed thieves and robbers who looted private parties and foreign aid agencies convoys, and a number of them were killed in the fighting. [Words indistinct] and the remaining of them were forced to leave the area. The report says: Most members of the robbers and thieves belonged to [the late] Esmat Moslem, a notorious commander of the communist regime's militia who waylaid convoys along the highway and arrested civilians and mojahedin. [Words indistinct] light and heavy weapons, BM12, BM1 [rockets], mortars, other rockets, and a large quantity of ammunition were captured.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Borujerdi Visits

Received by Dostum

LD2103144493 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 21 Mar 93

[Text] 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi, Iranian deputy foreign minister in charge of Asian and oceanic affairs, who is visiting

the city of Mazar-Sharif at the invitation of General Dostum, the leader of the Jonbesh-e Melli-e Shomal, met the leaders of the movement and discussed the situation in the country.

General Dostum thanked Iran for its efforts in solving the problems of Afghanistan, and said the failure to attend to the rights of all ethnic groups will cause the failure of any peace plan.

In turn the Iranian deputy foreign minister expressed Iran's interest in the establishment of peace and territorial integrity in Afghanistan, and said: The all-embracing nature of sovereignty in Afghanistan will lead to a firmer peace and tranquillity.

Meeting With Rabbani

LD2203104793 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani and 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi, Iran's deputy foreign minister for Asian and Oceanic affairs, discussed recent developments in Afghanistan, including the process of current talks between the jihadi group leaders.

During last night's meeting in Kabul, Borujerdi also expressed regret over the continuing sporadic clashes in Kabul. The Islamic Republic of Iran hopes the Islamic Government of Afghanistan will do all it can to end the clashes and prepare the way for an early return of Kabul residents to their homes, Borujerdi.

Afghan President Rabbani thanked Iran for its benevolent efforts to end Afghanistan's problems.

Rabbani said his policy is to create understanding through talks and he hopes this will be achieved as soon as possible.

Borujerdi Distributes Aid To Refugees

LD2203113293 I Tehran IRNA in English 1103 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] Kabul, March 22, IRNA—Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi on Sunday distributed seven tonnes of Iranian donated humanitarian relief aid among the Afghan refugees sheltered at the Shiite refugee camps in Mazar Sharif.

The refugees who are mostly from Kabul's Afshar district are living under very bad conditions at the camps.

Addressing the refugees, Borujerdi expressed hope that the Afghan Government will punish those responsible for destroying their houses and looting their shops.

Borujerdi, Afghan Leaders Review Peace Process

LD2203161193 Tehran IRNA in English 1515 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] Kabul, March 22, IRNA—A senior Iranian official and two Afghan leaders met here Monday and reviewed the peace process and the latest situation in war-torn Afghanistan.

Ettehad-e Eslami-e [Islamic Union of Afghanistan] Party leader and Minister of Defence Ahmad Shah Mas'ud in a meeting with visiting Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi, appreciated Iran's efforts in helping his country settle its problems.

Mas'ud said that the Afghans always expected Iran as "a great Muslim neighboring country" to rush to their help during their hardships.

He said the Afghan government hoped that clashes and bitter incidents did not occur in Kabul and the conflicts would be halted for ever to allow the Afghan nation and government reconstruct their country.

Mas'ud expressed hope that the trend of peace in Afghanistan would be "fruitful."

Afghan leaders signed a peace accord in Islamabad earlier this month and agreed to cease fire. But sporadic clashes still break out in the Afghan capital.

Borujerdi said extension of help to Afghanistan in a bid to resolve its problems is a "permanent policy" of the Islamic republic.

He regretted that Kabul citizens were mostly exposed to threats in the clashes and added that after tolerating years of hardship they expected the government and all parties to provide them with minimum living facilities.

Borujerdi also expressed hope that obstacles in the way of the peace trend would be immediately removed.

In another meeting with Secretary General of Afghan Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami-ye [Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan] party leader Hojjat ol-Eslam Mazari, Borujerdi discussed recent political developments in Afghanistan as well as the party's viewpoints on the Afghan peace trend.

Mazari appreciated the Islamic republic's "valuable" efforts in restoration of peace and stability in his country and said that Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami-ye Party's signing of the peace agreement was indicative of its reconciliation policy in the face of the Afghan events.

He regretted despite the announcement of the ceasefire, there were some Shiite residential areas in Kabul still subjected to missile attacks, while the government had the responsibility to prevent these attacks.

Borujerdi also congratulated Mazari on the New Year festival and expressed hope that it would be a turning point for termination of Afghans hardships and problems. He voiced Iran's readiness to continue with its efforts to end the Afghan crisis.

He commented that the recent peace agreement worked out by Afghan mojahedin leaders could be a "suitable" framework for ending the Afghan crisis.

* Sources Discuss Mas'ud's Role After Talks

93P50103A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 10 Mar 93
pp 1, 4

[Report by 'Abdallah al-Hajj from Jeddah, Ahmad Muwaffaq Zaydan from Peshawar, and AL-HAYAH bureau in London]

[Excerpts] This evening, Wednesday, the Afghan leaders will hold a press conference in Mecca after the custodian of the two mosques, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, receives them in the presence of Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The commanders are expected to affirm their solidarity in order to rebuild what the war has destroyed in their country and to reiterate their thanks to King Fahd, who promised them generous support in the reconstruction and in the strengthening of ties between the various Afghan groups. [passage omitted]

Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani said in a statement to AL-HAYAH yesterday that all of the Afghan sides agree that Defense Minister Ahmad Shah Mas'ud is the most appropriate person to hold this portfolio now. He affirmed that the defense council that will be formed will be under Mas'ud's command. He stated that all of the mojahedin commanders are eager to adhere to a permanent peace agreement under Saudi Arabia's and Pakistan's auspices and that "the difficult task" to achieve what was agreed upon is up to these commanders.

Informed sources think that the Afghan leaders are aware that Mas'ud has demonstrated that he is the "difficult number" in the Afghan equation that cannot be bypassed at the current stage, in view of the fact that all of the security agencies have come to be under his control.

Contacts and discussions between President Borhanoddin Rabbani and the leader of the Hezb-e Eslami, Golboddin Hekmatyar, have not stopped for the last 24 hours in al-Madinah, Mecca, and Jeddah within the framework of their continual coordination to loosen some of the knots, the most prominent of which is the issue of the chairmanship of the defense council that they have resolved to form. The two leaders have kept an eye on the news coming from Kabul, where the agreement on a cease-fire has witnessed violations embodied in exchanges of artillery barrages between the government forces, on one side, and the Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] and Hezb-e Wahdat [Unity Party] on the other. [passage omitted]

Battles in Kabul flared up again yesterday between the government forces and the Hezb-e Eslami and the Shiite Hezb-e Wahdat, which is supported by Tehran. The two sides exchanged missile and artillery fire in the morning in areas south, north, and west of the capital.

The two sides exchanged accusations—the Defense Ministry charged that the two parties fired missiles at residential quarters in the districts of Karta-e Naw and Shahr-e Naw. The loss in lives and property was not immediately known.

(Gorib 'Abdul Rahman Sa'id), director of the news agency that speaks for the Hezb-e Eslami, charged followers of the defense minister with beginning an attack on the parties' positions. He said in a statement to AL-HAYAH that there are parties that do not want peace to be established in Afghanistan, but he did not specify which parties. [passage omitted]

Rabbani Congratulates Pakistan's Sharif, Khan

LD2203172193 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1430 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] Esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan [ISA], has sent a message of congratulations to Islamabad addressed to Ghulam Ishaq Khan, president of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and [Prime Minister] Mohammad Nawaz Sharif as follows:

Allow me to express on behalf of the people and Islamic State of Afghanistan and myself, my best cordial congratulations to you and through you to the people and Government of Pakistan. The celebration of the auspicious occasion of this great national festival is not only the cause of happiness and pride to the Muslim people of Pakistan, but your friends, especially the people of Afghanistan, who are sincerely interested in the honor and prosperity of your country, who also share this happiness.

The tradition of friendship between our people has a lasting, historic, and profound character, and this friendship has developed satisfactorily in the spheres of culture and [words indistinct], and in relations between the peoples since the establishment of the first Islamic State in Afghanistan. The people of Afghanistan, who are celebrating the first anniversary of their Islamic revolution, will never forget their Pakistani friends' resolute support and assistance rendered during 14 years of jihad. We see the roots of this [word indistinct] in the characteristic relations of the two sides, and in the nature of the sensible and principled policies of the two sides, which are based on common phenomena of sincere loyalty, mutual respect, and cooperation, nonalignment, and support for international and regional peace.

The people of Afghanistan feel profound pleasure at the scientific and socio-economic development of Pakistan, and wish peace for you brothers and for themselves. The Islamic State of Afghanistan, which advances toward the wishes of its afflicted nations in accordance with the Islamabad Accord, is confident that, through the restoration of complete peace in Afghanistan, more grounds will come about for mutual cooperation between the two countries. I wish a prosperous and honored life for all Pakistani friends and health, tranquility, and prosperity for you.

Bangladesh

'Strong Protest' Lodged With Burma Over Border Attack

BK2203051793 Hong Kong AFP in English 0440 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] DHAKA, March 22 (AFP)—Bangladesh has strongly protested the attack by Burmese border guards

last week in which one Bangladeshi villager was killed and five injured, official sources said here Monday.

Dhaka has "lodged a strong protest" and asked Rangoon on Sunday to "clarify and verify" its position on the cross-border incident, the sources said without elaborating.

The private United News of Bangladesh (UNB) news agency, quoting a foreign office spokesman, said the foreign office had summoned Burmese Ambassador Soe Myint to hear an official protest.

Some 45 Lunthin Burmese border guards attacked a group of villagers Friday in Bangladesh's Naikonchari area, about five kilometers (three miles) from the border.

According to witnesses and security sources, the guards fired indiscriminately, killing one man and injuring five.

Early Sunday, Bangladesh security sources said they were still investigating the incident and could not say if the "uniformed" attackers belonged to the Lunthin forces.

The incident came as Bangladesh Communications Minister Oli Ahmed was about to end a four-day surprise official trip to Burma as a special envoy of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

Ahmed held talks with leaders of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC)—the official name for the Burmese junta—mainly on expediting the repatriation of some 260,000 Burmese Moslem refugees, called Rohingyas.

Some 280,000 Rohingyas had crossed into Bangladesh since March, 1991, alleging persecution by Burmese troops. Some 22,000 have been repatriated since September under a Dhaka-Rangoon agreement, but the pace slowed down in recent weeks.

Observers here said the border incident could further complicate the repatriation process.

Committee To Prevent Rao From Attending SAARC Summit

BK2203071793 Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 14 Mar 93 p 10

[By staff correspondent]

[Text] Babri Mosque Action Committee reiterated its stand to oppose the visit of Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao to Bangladesh to attend the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] summit in Dhaka in April.

The committee in a press release on Saturday asserted that it would not allow the Indian prime minister to come to Bangladesh before the reconstruction of the Babri Mosque which was damaged by Hindu fundamentalists. The committee blamed the Indian prime minister for violating his commitment to reconstruct the historic mosque.

The Action Committee said that the people of Bangladesh are ready to stop the visit of the Indian prime minister at

all costs. It urged the Bangladesh government to think over the consequences that may take place in view of the visit of the Indian prime minister.

Japan To Provide \$200-Million Loan for 5 Projects

BK2103155893 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1530 GMT 21 Mar 93

[Text] Japan will provide \$200 million as loan to Bangladesh for five development projects. This was stated by Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Toshio Saiki when he paid a farewell call on the prime minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, in Dhaka today. Chittagong airport development and Sylhet power plant are among the projects to be covered by the Japanese loan. During the meeting, Toshio Saiki said Japan will continue to extend economic assistance to Bangladesh in its efforts for development. He expressed his gratitude to the government for the cooperation extended to him in the discharge of his duties during his tenure in Bangladesh.

The prime minister thanked Mr. Saiki for his role in strengthening the existing friendship between the two countries. She expressed the hope that relations between Bangladesh and Japan will continue to grow. She conveyed her greetings to the emperor, empress, and the prime minister of Japan.

Zia Briefs ADB President on Government's Priorities

BK1803133393 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1230 GMT 18 Mar 93

[Text] The visiting president of the Asian Development Bank [ADB], Mr. Kimimasa Tarumizu, appreciating the economic measures of the present government, said that within a very short time it has been able to attain economic stability. The ADB president said this when he called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in Dhaka today. Having wide experience in international economy, Mr. Tarumizu expressed satisfaction over the economic policies and reform measures of the Bangladesh Government. He lauded the increase in the revenue earnings of the government, and its tax reforms and privatization measures. The ADB president thanked the prime minister for her personal initiative in the speedy implementation of ADB-aided projects. Mr. Tarumizu said the programs and strategies of the Bangladesh Government are consistent with the policies of the ADB.

The prime minister informed the visiting ADB president that her government has given priority to the alleviation of poverty, mass education, population control, women's education, and compulsory primary education. She further said that the government has been very successful in reducing system loss in the power sector.

The ADB president also held talks with the minister for energy and mineral resources, Khondaker Mosharraf Hossain. During the talks, Mr. Tarumizu promised increased assistance to Bangladesh for the development of the power sector and gas exploration. The energy minister thanked

the ADB president for his personal interest and also for the role of the Bank in the socioeconomic development of Bangladesh.

India

Top Militant, 2 Comrades Killed in Punjab

BK2303032493 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] In Punjab, one top militant and self-styled chief of a militant organization Balwinder Singh and two of his accomplices were killed in an encounter with security forces at Ghatiala in Gurdaspur District last night. According to the SSB [Special Security Bureau] Batala, the hard-core, Balwinder Singh, responsible for over 200 killings was carrying a reward of five lakh rupees over his head.

Rail Tracks Blown Up by Jharkhand Activists

BK2303090693 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0730 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] In Bihar, rail traffic was disrupted in two sections of the Southeastern Railway this morning as the Jharkhand activists blew off tracks at two places. A railway spokesman told our AIR [All India Radio] Ranchi correspondent that a bomb was exploded at Kita railway station between Ranchi and Muri sections while another explosion damaged the track between Taoran and Ilu railway stations. The Howrah-(Haitia) Express was held up in the section.

West Asian Groups Said To Be Behind Bombay Blasts

BK2203062793 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 15 Mar 93 p 1

[By Mahendra Ved]

[Text] NEW DELHI, March 14—Deduction of available information about the culprits behind the Bombay bomb blasts, made by experts in the Government, points to the possibility of involvement of one or more of the West Asian fundamentalist organisations, the personnel of which get their training from Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI).

However, the most puzzling thing is that none has claimed credit or responsibility for the series of blasts that have killed over 300 and injured over a 1,000, with extensive damage to property. This is normally done within hours, but in the present case, more than two days have already passed.

Sources in the Government rule out direct involvement of any of the foreign Governments, even though their nationals may be involved. Also being ruled out, tentatively though, is the hand of militants from Punjab or Kashmir or the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] of Sri Lanka.

Retaliation to the large-scale killings of Muslims in the December and January riots in Bombay is seen as the most plausible motive behind the act. That being so, such acts in Surat and Ahmedabad in Gujarat, taking place after some time are not being ruled out.

For the present, Bombay, which witnessed the worst of the communal violence in the recent weeks, appeared to have been chosen to focus attention and to earn international-publicity mileage. Attacks on establishments like the Bombay Stock Exchange, which have a lot of bearing on the country's economy, and on the Air India headquarters and five-star hotels, are seen as aimed at disrupting tourism. The message is political, but the impact, caused consciously, is both political and economic.

Militants of Punjab and Kashmir are not known to have the kind of expertise required for this type of operation that took place well away from their areas of operation. They could not have risked a large-scale action in Bombay, where the reaction from the authority could be, and indeed was, very swift. Sources point out that militants have been considerably weakened in Punjab and in the Valley, they are too busy re-grouping in the wake of the Punjab developments and their own intra-group squabbles.

As for the LTTE, the Tamil militant organisation of Sri Lanka, it does have the technological knowhow to carry out the operation, it is not seen as being keen to further antagonise the Indian authorities. The LTTE has lost credibility, and much of the Indian base since the assassination of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. It would do nothing that further erodes its sympathy in Tamil Nadu.

Sources rule out the Bombay incident as a retaliation to the recent killing of LTTE's key leader, S. Krishna Kumar alias 'Kittu' who is seen increasingly as having already fallen out with his supremo, Velupillai Prabhakaran.

Although Pakistan's name has figured, sources ruled out a direct involvement of the Pakistani Government for a number of reasons. Employing local contacts for the job may have had to be resorted to by whoever planned the operation, and anyone surviving, or caught subsequent to the act, could provide damaging clue to the Indian authorities.

Secondly, Pakistan is already under an official notice by the Bush Administration to demonstrate within a period of 120 days that it is not involved, nor is abetting or aiding any terrorist act in India. India has lodged numerous complaints against Pakistan blaming it on these scores in Punjab and Kashmir.

The Pak Government, is well aware that it would be the prime suspect and could get discredited at the slightest of evidence of direct involvement which could prompt the Clinton Administration to declare it a terrorist state.

Tamil Nadu Government Permits 21 Mar BJP Meeting in Madras

BK1903161093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 19 Mar 93

[Text] The Tamil Nadu government has permitted the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] to hold a public meeting in

Madras on Sunday [21 March]. Disclosing this in the state assembly today, the chief minister, Ms. Jayalalitha, said that the permission was granted as the BJP is a recognized political party and there is no ban on its functioning. She assured the house that her government will take all necessary steps to maintain law and order.

Tamil Nadu Congress-I Not To Patch Up With AIADMK

BK2003161293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 20 Mar 93

[Text] The Tamil Nadu unit of the Congress-I has decided not to make any effort to patch up with the AIADMK [All India Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] which has unilaterally broken the alliance. A resolution to this effect was unanimously adopted at a special meeting of the state Congress-I committee in Madras today. It accused the AIADMK of severing the alliance in a preplanned manner despite the repeated assurances by Congress-I President Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao that the alliance will continue.

BJP's Advani on Alliance With AIADMK

BK2103090093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 21 Mar 93

[Text] The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leader, Mr. L.K. Advani, has said there is a lot of goodwill between his party and the All India Anna DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam]. He was replying to a question on the possibility of an alliance between the two parties at a news conference in Madras today. Mr. Advani said the Tamil Nadu chief minister, Ms. Jayalalitha, was the only leader to support the BJP stand at the National Intergration Council meeting in New Delhi. Referring to the Bombay and Calcutta explosions, he said they are the results of criminalization of politics.

'Emergency' Congress-I Meeting Begins in Delhi

BK2203160393 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] An emergency meeting of the Congress-I Working Committee [CWC] began in New Delhi this evening. The meeting has been presided over by the Congress-I president, Mr. P.V. Narsimha Rao, and attended by CWC members. The situation arising out of the statement issued by the human resource development minister, Mr. Arjun Singh, is being discussed at the meeting.

Congress Committee Reiterates Faith in Rao's Leadership

BK2303005893 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0035 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] The Congress Working Committee [CWC] has unanimously reiterated its full faith in the leadership of the Congress-I president, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao. The CWC, which held its marathon meeting for over 10 hours in New Delhi, expressed its confidence that the prime minister will overcome the various complex problems faced by the nation today.

AIR [All India Radio] correspondent reports that the CWC, which began its emergency meeting yesterday evening, continued its deliberations till the early hours of this morning. The meeting was called to discuss the statement issued by Mr. Arjun Singh on Sunday. It felt that the statement was a violation of an earlier CWC resolution issued on 9th of last month. In a statement after the meeting, the AICC-I [All India Congress Committee-I] spokesman, Mr. B.N. Gadgil, said Mr. Arjun Singh has clarified that his statement was only an articulation of the issues that need to be discussed to fight communalism and not an accusation against any person or office. Mr. Arjun Singh said he withdraws his statement, if any reference in it gives this interpretation directly or indirectly.

Chief Minister Denies Allowing Activities of RSS, VHP

BK2303081293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0730 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] The Tamil Nadu chief minister, Miss Jayalalitha, has denied the allegation that her government is allowing the activities of the banned organizations like RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] and VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] in the state. She was replying to a special mention in the state assembly today about the involvement of the workers of the banned organizations in the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] rally held in Madras on Sunday last. Miss Jayalalitha said that the state government has also received such information and action will be taken if necessary.

Earlier, the Congress-I member, Mr. Kumari Anandan alleged that the workers of the banned organizations displaying their identity cards were seen at the BJP rally. He also pointed out that a BJP functionary who spoke at the meeting acknowledged the cooperation extended by the RSS and VHP for organizing the rally.

MP's Call On Center To Intervene Over 'Famine' in Bihar

BK2203043093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] In the Lok Sabha, several members from Bihar today expressed serious concern over the famine conditions prevailing in Palamau and adjoining districts of the state. They demanded that immediate relief measures be taken up to mitigate the sufferings of the people in the area. Raising the issue during the zero hour, Professor Rita Verma, BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], said the Center should intervene as the Bihar government has failed to meet the situation. A Janata Dal member said the state government alone cannot tackle the drought as the situation has assumed serious proportions. Members said several persons have died of starvation and there is an acute shortage of drinking water in the affected areas. There was also a demand by a JMM [Jharkhand Mukti Morcha] member that the Center should directly take up relief schemes.

The minister of state for parliamentary affairs, Mr. P.R. Kumaramangalam, assured the members that the government will give highest priority to the humanitarian

problem. He said a meeting of members of parliament from Bihar with the prime minister will be arranged to draw suitable schemes. A similar meeting has already taken place to discuss drought relief measures in Orissa.

Inflation Rate Comes Down to 6.3 Percent

BK2303082093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0730 GMT 23 Dec 93

[Text] The inflation rate has come down from 9.1 percent in November last year to 6.3 percent in January this year. This was stated by the finance minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, in the Rajya Sabha today. He was replying to supplementaries during the question hour. He said the fall in the prices of agricultural commodities in 1992-93 has helped in bringing down inflation. He said these commodities had witnessed a steep 35 percent increase in their prices during 1991-92.

Food Output Likely To Reach 200 Million Tons in '93

BK2203034893 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] The agriculture minister, Dr. Bal Ram Jakhar, has said that there is no need to import wheat, rice, and edible oil in view of increased production. In an interview with our Ludhiana correspondent, the minister said food grains production is likely to touch around 200 million tons this year. Dr. Jakhar disclosed that the government is introducing a comprehensive crop insurance scheme in one district in each state. The center is also encouraging farmers to set up small agro-based industrial units. The minister added that government is reorganizing the Agricultural Costs and Prices Commission with representation of farmers to help the farm sector.

Dinesh Singh on Fate of Indians in Hong Kong

BK2203092293 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] New Delhi has urged Islamabad to abandon its negative policies toward India and join the sincere efforts being made to resolve the differences peacefully and under the Simla Agreement. This was stated by the external affairs minister, Mr. Dinesh Singh, in the Lok Sabha today. In a written reply, he said that Pakistan made efforts to introduce a resolution on Jammu and Kashmir at the 49th session of Human Rights Commission in Geneva but could not succeed for lack of support. He said India had informed all the concerned countries that any resolution on Jammu and Kashmir will be totally unacceptable to New Delhi and the root cause of bilateral tension is Pakistan's sponsored terrorism against India. He said New Delhi will continue to apprise the international community of Pakistan's support to terrorism and subversion.

In reply to another question, he said the recent negative measures in visa policies of Pakistan will impede travel between the two countries to reduce people-to-people contacts. He said New Delhi has urged Islamabad to abide by the 1974 visa agreement between the two countries.

Mr. Dinesh Singh also told the House that New Delhi has made it clear that it is the basic responsibility of the British Government to safeguard the interest of the people of Indian origin in Hong Kong who are holding British passports. He said India has raised the matter with the British and Chinese Governments in view of Hong Kong being reverted to China in July 1997. The minister said Britain has given the assurance that they will consider their case with sympathy for admitting them into Britain if they are to leave Hong Kong. He said a senior Chinese official has also said that these people have the option of applying for Chinese citizenship if they so desire. There are about 22,500 Indian nationals and persons of Indian origin in Hong Kong.

Indian Envoy on Relations With Islamic World
*LD2103131893 Tehran IRNA in English 1224 GMT
21 Mar 93*

[Text] Athens, March 21, IRNA—A top Indian Foreign Ministry official Sunday said he did not think that India's relations with the Islamic world have been affected due to recent Hindu-Muslim violence followed by the destruction of the Babri Mosque.

"I don't think that our relations with the Islamic world have been affected. Yes there has been a reaction of concern from many Muslim countries about the destruction of the structure known as the Babri Mosque," Indian Foreign Secretary Jotindra Nath Dixit told IRNA in an interview.

"It is a great tragedy, but in a complex society like India such violence and traumas occur. I think we are in the process of overcoming the crisis created by that incident," Dixit, who is currently on a visit to Greece, said.

"In which other country," he asked "do you have the example of a minority of such influence. 118 million Muslims in a country of 890 million people constituting nearly one-eighth of our population."

When asked to comment on widespread riots in India following the Babri Mosque incident, he answered, "Don't riots occur in Pakistan, don't disturbances take place in Iran, is there no ethnic trouble in Turkey, in Iraq."

"I mean each in society which is complex and plural in terms of language and ethnicity it is bound to have these conflicts," Dixit, who served as India's ambassador to several Asian countries explained.

"Our approach has been extremely sober and practical. We have not reacted in a negative or angry manner to criticisms levelled against us by many Islamic countries.

"Our only friendly suggestion to them is that when they criticise India which is the second-largest Muslim country of the world, even if they do not accept us in the OIC - it does not erode the Islamic facet of our composite identity - I would very strongly urge that they start looking at the mirror and check themselves whether they have a right to criticise. And I don't think sensible people in those countries do," he said.

Commenting on press reports accusing foreign involvement in the recent bombings in Bombay, he said that "if this violence is found to be supported by any foreign country, then the government and people of India will naturally take note of that country's negative attitude and react appropriately."

Dixit described Indo-Iranian ties as "very good." But he was critical of Tehran's concern for world Muslims.

"They feel that they must be concerned about the Muslims everywhere in the world, including India. I don't think that governments should start getting concerned about their coreligionists in other countries. As far as nation-states exist it is for each government to take care of its people. I don't accept the logic of Iranian concern," he said.

"Our economic relations are very good. Our political relations continue at very close level. There are high level exchanges between India and Iran. Relations with Iran are very good," Dixit told IRNA.

He pointed that Iranian President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani had a "good meeting" with Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao at the sidelines of the Jakarta summit last September.

Dixit said India's relations with the Arab world is also "very good."

"Let me give you an example. Just one day after the bomb blast (in Bombay) we signed a \$4 billion memorandum for a gas pipeline with Oman," he noted.

Referring to the recent agreement among different Mojahedin groups in Afghanistan, Dixit said "India is glad that some sort of a tenuous arrangement has come into being that will stop the violence and the shooting."

"But we have yet to see whether the agreement would hold," he added.

Business Contracts Signed With Uzbekistan
*BK2203160793 Delhi All India Radio Network in
English 1530 GMT 22 Mar 93*

[Text] Several contracts were finalized to promote business between India and Uzbekistan during the five-day visit of a delegation of the Confederation of Indian Industry to Tashkent. The 13-member delegation led by Rohingtan Agha discussed areas of trade and cooperation with Uzbek business and official circles. A contract worth one million dollars was signed for the supply of water treatment plants in barter trade for gray cotton cloth from that country. Another Indian firm will supply 2,000 trucks to Uzbekistan and will set up a leasing company.

Maldives

Coastguards Seize Poaching Ship, Arrest Russian Crew

*BK2203093493 Hong Kong AFP in English 0930 GMT
22 Mar 93*

[Text] COLOMBO, March 22 (AFP)—The coastguard in the Maldives seized a fishing vessel poaching in its territorial waters and arrested the 33-member Russian crew, official sources said Monday.

The Liberian-registered fishing vessel was sighted in the southern Laam atoll of the Indian Ocean republic and brought to the capital Male over the weekend, official sources in Male said.

"A coastguard vessel which sighted the poaching ship just six miles off the coast had to call in reinforcements as the Russian crew refused to obey orders. They were very aggressive," an official said by telephone.

Maldives is highly sensitive to foreign vessels poaching in their territorial water because the population of just over 200,000 Maldivians depends largely on fishing.

Maldives comprises 1,192 coral islands stretching about 823 kilometers (514 miles) across the Equator.

After repeated intrusions into the rich fishing grounds of the Maldives by Sri Lankan fishermen, the Colombo government had given an undertaking to the Maldivian authorities that it will not intervene on behalf of offenders.

Nepal

Japanese Aid for Food, Educational Programs Cited

BK2303113493 Hong Kong AFP in English 1117 GMT 23 Mar 93

[Text] Kathmandu, March 23 (AFP)—Japan has granted Nepal 9.3 million dollars for educational, cultural and emergency food supply programmes, a Nepalese Finance Ministry announcement said Tuesday.

"About 2.5 million dollars will be used for the import of rice from Thailand to meet the food shortage in the low-land tropical region caused by partial droughts and insufficient rains last year," the announcement said.

"Nepal has faced an acute food shortage this year because of the shortfall in rice production by about 300,000 metric tons during 1992," it said.

Power Cuts May Continue Until July 1995

BK2003140093 Hong Kong AFP in English 1353 GMT 20 Mar 93

[Text] Kathmandu, March 20 (AFP)—The Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) announced Saturday that lengthy power cuts could continue until July 1995 because of a lack of water in the country's reservoirs.

"The present power cut is purely attributed to the decline of the flow of water in the rivers and the low level of water in the Kulekhani (65 kilometres south of here) Reservoir due to insufficient rains during the summer last year," NEA Director General Ajit Narayan Singh Thapa said in a statement.

He added, however, that "power shedding time might be reduced if the snow of the Himalayas starts to melt, which would improve the flow of water as well as if the rainfall during the current summer is adequate." [words indistinct] "The NEA plans to gradually reduce the hours of power

cuts at night if the water flow in the snow-fed rivers increases from next month," Thapa said.

An employee at the 99-megawatt-capacity Kulekhani phases one and two said the project had been producing at less than half of capacity because of a lack of water in the Indra Sarovar Dam.

He said the water in the dam was only six meters deep, enough "for only 40 more days if the water level does not improve." During the monsoon, the dam usually contains 55 metres of water, he said.

"If the dry spell continues, this may lower the present level of water in the dam, forcing the power house to stop generating power," he added.

Meanwhile, the Indian-aided 20-megawatt Trisuli and the 14-megawatt Decighat projects, 120 to 150 kilometres northwest of Kathmandu, have stopped generating power altogether because of technical problems.

These projects are to undergo 40 million dollars in refurbishments over the next two years to bring them up to 40 megawatt capacity.

Of the 80-megawatt potential electricity generating units run by fuel, mechanical problems have limited output to 35 megawatts, the NEA said.

Meanwhile, Mapesh Lal Pradhan, president of the Federation of Nepal Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said: "The power shedding... has adversely affected the national industries, particularly the woollen carpet and ready-made garment industries."

Pakistan

Prime Minister: Accusations of Terrorism 'Totally False'

BK2303084793 Islamabad THE PAKISTAN TIMES in English 23 Mar 93 p 1

[Text] Karachi, March 22: Prime Minister Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif has expressed his anger over efforts by some US political leaders to help declare Pakistan a terrorist state.

Any suggestion of Pakistan's involvement in terrorist activities anywhere are totally false and unfounded. As a law-abiding member of the international community, "we are opposed to terrorism in all of its forms and manifestations".

He recorded these remarks in an interview with the TIMES OF OMAN newspaper published on Sunday.

Speaking about the problems faced by Pakistan in its dealing with the United States, he said Pakistan's nuclear programme was the main factor in the deterioration of bilateral ties with United States.

About the Indo-Pak relations the Prime Minister stated that the worsening of relations between Pakistan and India can be reversed if India took on the major role in de-escalating tensions with its neighbours.

He said Indo-Pakistan relations are passing through a very difficult phase. The two countries have a long history of a relationship characterised by conflicts, tensions, distrust and misperception.

"Our relations came under strain when Kashmiris launched the latest phase of their movement for exercising their right to self-determination", he added.

Although the strain in the relations became more pronounced after the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, Mr. Nawaz Sharif remarked.

He expressed his disappointment that he could not meet Indian Prime Minister Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao as scheduled on December 13 last year in Dhaka where the 7th SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] Summit was to be held.

"The demolition of the Babri Masjid has vitiated Pakistan-Indian relations to a large extent. The people of Pakistan who have deep emotional bonds with the Muslim heritage in India were traumatised on this development, he added.

Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif has said he was happy that Ms. Benazir Bhutto, Leader of Opposition and co-Chairperson, PPP [Pakistan People's Party] accepted the government's offer to take over chairmanship of the House's Standing Committee on Foreign Relations.

About the role of the opposition in the country's democracy, he said "the task of putting the country on the road to progress is not the responsibility of the government alone".

"I feel that with the consolidation of the democratic institutions in the country this realisation is gradually gaining strength among all segments of our society", he added.

UK Frigates Alternative as Leases for U.S. Ships Expire

BK2303105993 Karachi DAWN in English 23 Mar 93 p 8

[Text] Rawalpindi, March 22: Pakistan is exploring the possibility of purchasing British frigates following the United States insistence that the Pakistan Navy return nine leased US vessels.

"We are trying to seek extension of the leases, but at the same time, we are also considering alternatives," the Minister for Defence Production, Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani, told a news conference.

"We will be able to secure frigates from other sources to fill the gap if the US does not agree."

Bijarani said the lease on one US supply vessel had already expired, while the lease on the eight other would run out by the end of the next year.

Eight of the lease ships are frigates and the other is a supply vessel.

The Pakistan navy's other major units comprise two ex-British frigates, six destroyers and six submarines. Pakistan is also considering buying battle tanks from Britain, Russia, Slovakia and Poland, Bijarani said.

He said initial talks had been held with British manufacturers, adding that the Chieftain model was among the options.

The Minister indicated that negotiations with Poland for 300 tanks had been [word indistinct] because of [word indistinct] found during an evaluation of the tank by army experts.

"Our experts have pointed out some lapses and defects, and further negotiations will take place after the Polish side satisfies us in this regard," he said. Bijarani said Pakistan had the financial resources to meet its defence needs.

He said the process of military procurement was temporarily affected by the sudden death of Gen Asif Nawaz as the new army chief needed time to study various proposals that had been under consideration.

Indian Envoy Refutes Charges on Media Ban in Kashmir

BK2103145093 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 21 Mar 93

[Text] The Indian High Commissioner in Islamabad, Mr. S.K. Lamba, has said that over 18 major foreign media organizations visited Jammu and Kashmir during the last one year. He told our Islamabad correspondent that agencies like BBC, Voice of America, Time, and Newsweek visited the state without any problem to report on the developments there. The statement from Mr. Lamba comes in the wake of allegations made by the Pakistan minister of state for foreign affairs, Mr. Mohammad Siddique Kanjoo, that New Delhi is not allowing foreign journalists and media organizations to visit Jammu and Kashmir.

Government To File Petition Against Kashmir Court Ruling

BK2103041093 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 21 Mar 93

[Text] The Governments of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir have decided to appeal to the Azad Kashmir Supreme Court against the Azad Kashmir High Court ruling on the status of northern areas. The decision was made at a meeting of the committee formed by the prime minister to examine the political and constitutional implications of the court ruling. The meeting was presided over by Chaudhary Abdul Ghafoor, the federal law and justice minister.

President, Premier Send New Year Message to Rafsanjani

LD2203122093 Tehran IRNA in English 1205 GMT 22 Mar 93

[Text] Islamabad, March 22, IRNA—In two separate congratulatory messages, Pakistani president and prime minister felicitated President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani on the advent of the new Iranian year 1372 (began on March 20).

The two expressed hope that the Irano-Pakistani bilateral "friendly and brotherly" relations would ever expand.

"The ties of brotherhood and friendship that bind Iran and Pakistan derive their inspiration from the sublime ideals of our glorious faith and our shared heritage and culture," said Pakistani Prime Minister Mohammad Nawaz Sharif. "I am confident that the fraternal relations of cooperation will continue to be further strengthened in the coming years," he added.

In his message Pakistan President Ghulam Ishaq Khan said "I am confident that the close and friendly relations that exist between our two countries would continue to grow in strength in the years ahead."

Ishaq Khan National Day Address Stresses Unity

*BK2303090093 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas
Service in English 0800 GMT 23 Mar 93*

[Text] The president, Mr Ghulam Ishaq Khan, has reaffirmed the nation's resolve to realize the objectives of the

creation of Pakistan by making it a modern, progressive, democratic Islamic state, which is self-reliant in every sphere, peaceful internally and externally, and which enjoys a respectable place in the comity of nations. He was addressing the nation on the occasion of joint services Pakistan Day parade held at the Jinnah Avenue in Islamabad this morning despite heavy rain. The president stressed that the future of our existence and survival depends on a prosperous, strong, united, and developed Pakistan. This could be achieved through hard work to a bright and secure future for our coming generation. Mr. Ghulam Ishaq Khan said it is not possible for an individual to preserve the national interests and objectives and for this purpose the whole nation and national institutions would have to utilize their collective energies. By the grace of God, democratic institutions have come into being in Pakistan, but these will have to be strengthened to successfully steer through any unforeseen crisis. For this purpose, he said, democratic thinking, culture, and tradition need to be promoted and there must be a balanced approach and moderation at all levels.